

The Girl Scouts' Rally



Girl Scout Series

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“So you want me to come to your show, do you?” said Mr. Harriman.

Girl Scouts Series, Volume 2

The
Girl Scouts Rally
or
Rosanna Wins

BY
Katherine Keene Galt



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THE GIRL SCOUTS SERIES

- 1 THE GIRL SCOUTS AT HOME
- 2 THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY
- 3 THE GIRL SCOUTS TRIUMPH

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

CHAPTER I

THREE little girls sat in a row on the top step of a beautiful home in Louisville. At the right was a dark-haired, fairylike child on whose docked hair a velvet berét, or French officer's cap, sat jauntily. Her dark eyes were round and thoughtful as she gazed into space. There was a little wrinkle between her curved black brows.

Beside her, busily knitting on a long red scarf, sat a sparkling little girl whose hazel eyes danced under a fringe of blond curls. Her dainty motions and her pretty way of tossing back her beautiful hair caused people to stop and look at her as they passed, but Elise was all unconscious of their admiration. Indeed, she was almost too shy, and few knew how full of fun and laughter she could be.

The third girl wore a businesslike beaver hat over her blond docked hair, and her great eyes, blue and steady, were levelled across Elise, who knitted on in silence, to the dark girl in the velvet cap.

Helen Culver spoke at last. "Well, Rosanna,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

what are you thinking? Have you any plan at all?"

The dark child spoke. "No, Helen, I can't think of a thing. It makes me so provoked!"

"Tell me, will you not?" asked Elise in her pretty broken English. She was trying so hard to speak like Rosanna and Helen that she could scarcely be prevailed upon to say anything in French.

Many months had passed since Elise, in the care of the kind ladies of the American Red Cross, had come over from France to her adopted guardian, young Mr. Horton. She had grown to be quite American during that time, and was very proud of her attainments. The dark and dreadful past was indeed far behind, and while she sometimes wept for her dear grandmother, who had died in Mr. Horton's tender arms in the old château at home, she loved her foster mother, Mrs. Hargrave, with all her heart. And with Elise laughing and dancing through it, the great old Hargrave house was changed indeed. While Elise was crossing the ocean, Mrs. Hargrave had fitted up three rooms for her. There was a sitting-room, that was like the sunny outdoors, with its dainty flowered chintzes, its ivory wicker furniture, its plants and canaries singing in wicker cages. Then there was a bedroom that simply put you to sleep just to look at it: all blue and silver, like a summer evening. Nothing sang here, but there was a big music box,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

old as Mrs. Hargrave herself, that tinkled Elise to sleep if she so wished. And the bathroom was papered so that you didn't look at uninteresting tiles set like blocks when you splashed around in the tub. No; there seemed to be miles and miles of sunny sea-beach with little shells lying on the wet sand and sea gulls swinging overhead.

Mrs. Hargrave was so delighted with all this when it was finished that it made her discontented with her own sitting-room with its dim old hangings and walnut furniture.

"No wonder I was beginning to grow old," she said to her lifelong friend, Mrs. Horton. "No wonder at all! All this dismal old stuff is going up in the attic. I shall bring down my great great-grandmother's mahogany and have all my wicker furniture cushioned with parrots and roses."

"It sounds dreadful," said Mrs. Horton.

"It won't be," retorted her friend. "It will be perfectly lovely. Did you know that I can play the piano? I can, and well. I had forgotten it. I am going to have birds too — not canaries, but four cunning little green love-birds. They are going to have all that bay window for themselves. And I shall have a quarter grand piano put right there."

"I do think you are foolish," said Mrs. Horton, who was a cautious person. "What if this child turns out to be a failure? All you have is my son's word for it, and what does a boy twenty-four years

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

through the war. He was at home again, and together they were fitting out a cunning little bungalow in the Highlands. As soon as everything was arranged quite to their satisfaction, they were going to be married, and Minnie vowed that she could never get married unless she could have a real wedding with bridesmaids and all, and she had a scheme! By the way she rolled her eyes and her young man chuckled, it seemed as though it must be a very wonderful scheme indeed, but although all three girls hung around her neck and teased, not another word would she say. Minnie had two little sisters who were about the ages of Rosanna and Elise and Helen, but they did not know what the scheme was either. It was *very* trying.

Helen Culver no longer lived over Mrs. Horton's garage and her father no longer drove the Horton cars, but her home was very near in a dear little apartment as sweet and clean and dainty as it could be. Mr. Culver and Uncle Robert were often together and did a good deal of figuring and drawing but other than guessing that it was something to do with Uncle Robert's business, the children did not trouble their heads.

Helen was ahead of Rosanna in school. She had had a better chance to start with, as Rosanna had only had private teachers and so had had no reason to strive to forge ahead. There had been no one to get ahead *of*! Now, however, she was studying to such good purpose that she hoped soon to

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

overtake Helen. But it was a hard task, because Helen was a very bright little girl who could and would and *did* put her best effort in everything she did.

These, then, were the three little girls who sat on Rosanna's doorstep and smelled the burning leaves and enjoyed the beautiful fall day.

"Rosanna is so good at making plans," said Helen, smiling over at her friend.

"What shall your good plan be for?" asked Elise.

"Don't you remember, Elise, our telling you about the picnic we had once, and the children who took supper with us?"

"Oh, *oui* — yess, yess!" said Elise, correcting herself hastily.

"And we told you how we took them home and saw poor Gwenny, their sister, who is so lame that she cannot walk at all, and is so good and patient about it? We mean to take you over to see her, now that you can speak English so nicely. She wants to see you so much."

"I would be charm to go," declared Elise, nodding her curly head.

"Well," continued Rosanna, "Gwenny's mother says that Gwenny could be cured, but that it would cost more than she could ever pay, and it is nothing that she could get done at the free dispensaries. Those are places where very, very poor people can go and get good doctors and nurses

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

and advice without paying anything at all, but Gwenny could not go there.

"She would have to go to a big hospital in Cincinnati and stay for a long while. I thought about asking my grandmother if she would like to send Gwenny there, but just as I was going to speak of it last night, she commenced to talk to Uncle Robert about money, and I heard her tell him that she was never so hard up in her life, and what with the Liberty Loan drives taking all her surplus out of the banks, and the high rate of taxes, she didn't know what she was going to do. So I couldn't say a thing."

"The same with ma maman," said Elise. "She calls those same taxes robbers. So you make the plan?"

"That's just it: I *don't*," said Rosanna ruefully. "I wish I could think up some way to earn money, a lot of it ourselves."

"Let's do it!" said Helen in her brisk, decided way.

"But *how*?" questioned Rosanna. "It will take such a lot of money, Helen. Hundreds and hundreds of dollars, maybe *thousands*."

"I should think the thing to do would be to ask a doctor exactly how much it would cost, first of all," said the practical Helen.

"Another thing," said Rosanna. "Gwenny's family is very proud. They don't like to feel that people are taking care of them. The Associated

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Charities gave Gwenny a chair once, so she could wheel herself around, but it made them feel badly, although Gwenny's mother said she knew that it was the right thing to accept it."

"She will feel that it is the thing to do if we can pay to have Gwenny cured too," said Helen. "You know how sensible she is, Rosanna. She must realize that everybody knows that she does all she can in this world for her family. I heard mother say she never saw any woman work so hard to keep a home for her children.

"Mother says she never rests. And she is not trained, you know, to do special work like type-writing, or anything that is well paid, so she has to be practical nurse and things like that."

"Aren't all nurses practical?" asked Rosanna, a frown of perplexity on her brow.

"Trained nurses are not," replied Helen. "Trained nurses get thirty and forty dollars a week and a practical nurse gets seven or eight, and works harder. But you see she never had a chance to get trained. It takes a long time, like going to school and graduating, only you go to the hospital instead."

"I know," said Rosanna. "There were what they called undergraduate nurses at the Norton Infirmary and they wore a different uniform. But they were all pretty, and so good to me."

"Well, you can't do much on what Gwenny's mother makes," said Helen.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Elise sighed. "It is so sad," she declared. "Do the robber Taxes attack her also?"

"No; she has nothing to attack," laughed Helen.

"Is Mees Gwenny a Girl Scout?" asked Elise.

"No, but her sister Mary is. She went in about the time Rosanna joined, but she does not belong to our group. They live in another part of the city."

"Will my allowance help?" asked Elise. "I will give it so gladly. Ma maman is so good, so generous! I never can spend the half. I save it to help a little French child, but surely if Mees Gwenny is your dear friend and she suffers——"

"She suffers all right," declared Helen. "Oh, Rosanna, we have *got* to think up some way to help her! I am going to ask mother."

"Helen, do you remember what our Captain said at the very last meeting? No, you were not there; I remember now. She said that we must learn to act for ourselves and not forever be asking help from our families. She said that we should always consult them before we made any important move, but she wanted us to learn to use our own brains. Now it does look to me as though this was a time to use all the brains we have. Think how wonderful it would be if we could only do this ourselves!"

"What do you mean by *we*? Just us three, or the Girl Scouts in our group?" asked Helen.

"I don't know," said Rosanna dismally. "I really haven't the first idea! Let's all think."

CHAPTER II

THREE in a row, they sat and thought while the leaf piles smouldered and the afternoon went by. Plan after plan was offered and discussed and cast aside. At last Elise glanced at her little silver wrist watch, and wound up her scarf.

"Time for maman to come home," she said. "She likes it when I meet her at the door with my love, and myself likes it too."

"Of course you do, you dear!" said Helen. "Good-bye! We will keep on thinking and perhaps tomorrow we will be able to get hold of some plan that will be worth acting on. I must go too, Rosanna."

"I will walk around the block with you," said Rosanna, rising and calling a gay good-bye after Elise. She went with Helen almost to the door of her apartment and then returned very slowly. How she did long to help Gwenny! There must be some way. Poor patient, uncomplaining Gwenny! Rosanna could not think of her at all without an ache in her heart. She was so thin and her young face had so many, *many* lines of pain.

She was so thoughtful at dinner time that her Uncle Robert teased her about it. He wanted to

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

know if she had robbed a bank or had decided to run off and get married and so many silly things that his mother told him to leave Rosanna alone. Rosanna smiled and simply went on thinking. After dinner she slipped away and went up to her own sitting-room. Then Uncle Robert commenced to worry in earnest. He had his hat in his hand ready to go over and see Mr. Culver, but he put it down again and went up to Rosanna's room, three steps at a time.

Rosanna called "Come," in answer to his knock in quite her usual tone of voice, and Uncle Robert heaved a sigh of relief.

He stuck his head in the door, and said in a meek tone: "I thought I would come up to call on you, Princess. Mother is expecting a bridge party, and it is no place for me."

"That is what I thought," said Rosanna. "Besides, I wanted to think."

"Well, I am known as a hard thinker myself," said Uncle Robert. "If you will invite the part of me that is out here in the hall to follow my head, I will be glad to help you if I can."

"I don't see why I shouldn't tell you about things anyway," mused Rosanna. "You are not a parent, are you?"

"No, ma'am, I am *not*," said Uncle Robert. "Nary a parent! Why?"

He came in without a further invitation and sat down in Rosanna's biggest chair. At that it

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

squeaked in an alarming manner, and Uncle Robert made remarks about furniture that wouldn't hold up a growing boy like himself. When he appeared to be all settled and comfortable, and Rosanna had shoved an ash tray over in a manner that Uncle Robert said made him feel like an old married man, he said, "Now fire ahead!" and Rosanna did.

She told him all about Gwenny and her family — her mother and Mary and selfish Tommy, and good little Myron, and Luella and the heavy baby, and the story was so well told that Uncle Robert had hard work holding himself down. He felt as though the check book in his pocket was all full of pricklers which were sticking into him, and in another pocket a bank book with a big, big deposit, put in it that very day, kept shouting, "Take care of Gwenny yourself!" so loudly that he was sure Rosanna must hear.

But Uncle Robert knew that that was not the thing for him to do. He could not take all the beauty and generosity out of their effort when their dear little hearts were so eagerly trying to find a way to help.

He hushed the bank book up as best he could and said to Rosanna, "I don't worry a minute about this thing, Rosanna. I know perfectly well that you will think up some wonderful plan that will bring you wads of money, and as long as I am *not* a parent, I don't see why I can't be your councillor. There might be things that I could attend to. I

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

could take the tickets at the door or something like that."

"Tickets!" said Rosanna, quite horrified. "Why, Uncle Bob, we can't give a *show*!"

"I don't see why not, if you know what you want to show," answered Uncle Robert. "You see benefit performances given all the time for singers and pianists and actors who want to retire with a good income. Some of them have one every year, but you couldn't do that for Gwenny. However I'll stand by whenever you want me, you may feel sure of that, and if I can advance anything in the way of a little money—" he tapped the bank book, which jumped with joy.

"Oh, thank you!" said Rosanna. "We will be sure to tell you as soon as we can hit on a plan, and we will have you to go to for advice, and that will be such a help!"

After Uncle Bob had taken himself off, Rosanna went slowly to bed. She thought while she was undressing and after she had put out the light and was waiting for her grandmother to come in and kiss her good-night. And the last thing before she dropped off to sleep her mind was whirling with all sorts of wild ideas, but not one seemed to be just what was wanted. One thing seemed to grow clearer and bigger and stronger, and that was the feeling that Gwenny must be helped.

The first thing that she and Helen asked each other the next day when they met on the way to

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

school was like a chorus. They both said, "Did you think of anything?" and neither one had.

Sad to relate, neither Rosanna nor Helen made brilliant recitations that day, and coming home from school Helen said gravely, "What marks did you get today, Rosanna?"

"Seventy," answered Rosanna with a flush.

"I got seventy-two, and it was a review. Oh dear, this won't do at all! I was thinking about Gwenny, and trying to work up a plan so hard that I just couldn't study. Either we have positively got to think up something right away, or else we will have to make up our minds that we must do our thinking on Saturdays only. Can't you think of a single thing?"

"I seem to have glimmers of an idea," said Rosanna, "but not very bright ones."

"All I can think of is to get all the girls in our group to make fancy things and have a fair."

"That is not bad," said Rosanna, "but would we make enough to count for much? Even if all the girls in our group should go to work and work every single night after school we would not be able to make enough fancy articles to make a whole sale."

"I suppose not," sighed Helen. "This is Thursday. If we can't think of something between now and Saturday afternoon, let's tell the girls about it at the meeting and see what they suggest, and ask if they would like to help Gwenny. But oh,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

I wish we could be the ones to think up something! You see Gwenny sort of belongs to us, and I feel as though we ought to do the most of the work."

That night at dinner there was a guest at Rosanna's house, young Doctor MacLaren, who had been in service with Uncle Robert. Rosanna quite lost her heart to him, he was so quiet and so gentle and smiled so sweetly at her grandmother. She sat still as a mouse all through the meal, listening and thinking.

After dinner when they had all wandered into the lovely old library that smelled of books, she sat on the arm of her Uncle Robert's chair, and while her grandmother was showing some pictures to the doctor, she whispered to her uncle, "Don't you suppose the doctor could tell us how much it would cost to cure Gwenny?"

"You tickle my ear!" he said, and bit Rosanna's.

"Behave!" said Rosanna sternly. "Don't you suppose he could?"

"I am sure he could, sweetness, but I sort o' think he would have to see Gwenny first. Shall we ask him about it?"

"Oh, please let's!" begged Rosanna.

"Th' deed is did!" said Uncle Robert, and as soon as he could break into the conversation, he said: "Rick, Rosanna and I want to consult you."

Rosanna squeezed his hand for that; it was so much nicer than to put it all off on her.

Doctor MacLaren laughed his nice, friendly

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

laugh. "Well, if you are both in some scheme, I should say it was time for honest fellows like me to be careful. Let's hear what it is."

"You tell, Rosanna," said Uncle Robert. "I can't talk and smoke all at the same time."

So Rosanna, very brave because of Uncle Robert's strong arm around her, commenced at the beginning and told all about Gwenny and her family, and her bravery in bearing the burden of her lameness and ill health. And she went on to tell him about the Girl Scouts and all the good they do, and that she was sure that they would help, but they (she and Helen) hated to put it before the meeting unless they had some idea of the amount of money it would be necessary for them to earn. And another thing; what if they should start to get the money, and couldn't? What a *dreadful* disappointment it would be for Gwenny and indeed all the family down to Baby Christopher!

The two young men heard her out. Then Uncle Robert said:

"I don't know the exact reason, but it seems that you cannot work with these Girl Scouts if you are a parent. Are you a parent, Rick?"

"Please don't tease, Uncle Bobby," said Rosanna pleadingly. "It is only that we Scout girls are supposed to try to do things ourselves without expecting all sorts of help from our mothers and fathers — and grandmothers and uncles," she added rather pitifully.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Robert patted her hand. Rosanna was an orphan.

"I see now how it is," he said. "Tell us, Rick, what you think about this."

"I think that Saturday morning, when there is no school, Rosanna might take me to call on Miss Gwenny and we will see about what the trouble is. And I think as she does, that it would be very wise to say nothing at all about this plan until we know something about the case. It would be cruel to get the child's hopes up for nothing. If there is anything that I dare do, I will promise you now that I will gladly do it, but I cannot tell until I see her."

"Thank you ever and ever so much!" said Rosanna. "We won't tell anyone a thing about it!"

"Can you drive over to Gwenny's tomorrow and tell her mother that a doctor friend of mine is coming to see her?" asked Uncle Robert.

"Indeed I can if grandmother is willing!" said Rosanna. "Oh, I *do* feel as though we will think up some way of earning the money!"

Rosanna was so happy that she overslept next morning and was nearly late getting to school, so she did not see Helen until they were dismissed. They walked slowly home and sat down on their favorite place on the top step. They had been sitting quietly, watching a group of children playing in the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

leaves, when Rosanna jumped to her feet and commenced to dance up and down.

"Oh, Helen, Helen," she cried. "I believe I have it! I believe I have it! Oh, I am so excited!"

"Well, do tell me!" exclaimed Helen.

"That is just what I am going to do," said Rosanna, still dancing. "Let's go around in the garden and sit in the rose arbor where no one will disturb us."

"That is the thing to do," agreed Helen, and together they went skipping through the iron gateway that led into the lovely old garden. Once upon a time that gate had been kept locked and little Rosanna had been almost a prisoner among the flowers and trees that made the garden so lovely. But now the gate swung on well-oiled hinges and all the little Girl Scouts were welcome to come and play with Rosanna in her playhouse or ride her fat little pony around the gravelled paths.

The children banged the gate shut behind them and went to the most sheltered spot in the garden, the rose arbor, where they were hidden from view. They threw their school books on the rustic table and settled themselves in two big chairs.

"Now *do go on*," said Helen with a little thrill in her voice. "Oh, I *do* feel that you have thought up something splendid!"

CHAPTER III

"I HAVE been thinking and thinking," said Rosanna, "and not an idea have I had until just now. Here is what I just thought up.

"You know Uncle Bob was telling me about benefit performances that actors and musicians have. I think they get them up themselves mostly, when they want some money, but I was talking to Minnie about it yesterday when she came in for a minute and she says in her church they have benefits all the time. People sing and play and recite poetry, and it is lovely. And I thought up something better still.

"What if you and I, Helen, could make up a sort of play all about the Girl Scouts and give it?"

"Write it out of our heads?" said Helen, quite aghast.

"Yes," said Rosanna. "It is easy. Before grandmother used to let me have little girls to play with, I used to make up plays, oh lots of times!"

"With conversations?" pressed Helen.

"Yes, made up of conversations and coming on the stage and going off again, and people dying, and everything."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Dear me!" said Helen with the air of one who never suspected such a thing of a friend. "*Dear me!*" she said again. "I am sure I could *never* do it. You will have to do it yourself. What is it going to be about?"

"Why, I have to have time to think," said Rosanna. "You have to think a long time when you are going to be an author. It is very difficult."

"You don't suppose you are all out of practice, do you?" asked Helen anxiously. "Why, Rosanna, that would be too perfectly splendid! A real play! Where could we give it? We couldn't rent a real theatre."

"Oh, my, no!" said Rosanna, beginning to be rather frightened at the picture Helen was conjuring up. "We won't have that sort of a play. We will have a little one that we can give in grandmother's parlor, or over at Mrs. Hargrave's."

"I wouldn't," said Helen stoutly. "I just know you can write a beautiful play, Rosanna, and I think we ought to give it in some big place where a lot of people can come, and we will have tickets, and chairs all in rows and a curtain and everything."

"Oh, I don't believe I could write a good enough play for all that," cried Rosanna.

"Well, just do the best you can and I know it will be perfectly lovely."

"I tell you what," said Rosanna, beginning to be sorry that she had spoken. "Please don't tell

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Elise or anyone about it until I see what I can write, and then after you and I have read it, if it is good enough, we will show it to Uncle Robert and see what he says."

"It *will* be good enough," said Helen positively. "Just think of the piece of poetry you wrote to read at the Girl Scout meeting. It was so lovely that I 'most cried. All that part about the new moon, and how you felt when you died. It sounded so true, and yet I don't see how you know how you are going to feel when you die. I can't feel it at all. I suppose that is because you are a poet. Mother says it is a great and beautiful thing to be a poet, but that you must look out for your digestion."

"My digestion is all right so far," said Rosanna. "I am glad to know that, though, because if your mother says so, it must be so."

"Of course!" said Helen proudly. "When will you begin your play, Rosanna?"

"Right away after dinner," said Rosanna. "That is, if Uncle Robert goes out. If he stays at home I will have to play cribbage with him. If I go off to my own room, he comes right up. He says he is afraid that I will get to nursing a secret sorrow."

"What is a secret sorrow?" asked Helen.

"I don't know exactly," said Rosanna. "Uncle Robert looked sort of funny when I asked him, and perhaps he made it up because he just said, 'Why

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

—er, why — er, a secret sorrow is — don't you know what it is, Rosanna?"

"Sometimes I wonder if your Uncle Robert really means all he says," said Helen suspiciously.

"I wonder too," agreed Rosanna, nodding, "but he is a perfect dear, anyway, even if he is old. He is twenty-four, and grandmother is always saying that Robert is old enough to know better."

"I know he will be all sorts of help about our play, anyway," said Helen.

"I know he will too," said Rosanna. "We will show him the play the minute I finish it."

Rosanna went right to work on her play whenever she had any time to spare.

When Saturday morning came she went with Doctor MacLaren to see Gwenny, and after she had introduced him to Gwenny's mother she went and sat in the automobile with Mary and Luella and Myron and Baby Christopher to talk to. But she scarcely knew what she was saying because she was so busy wondering what the doctor would do to poor Gwenny, whose back nearly killed her if anyone so much as touched it.

The doctor stayed a long, long time, and when he came out he stood and talked and talked with Gwenny's mother. He smiled his kind, grave smile at her very often, but when he turned away and came down the little walk Rosanna fancied that he looked graver than usual.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Is she *very* bad?" Rosanna asked when the machine was started.

"Pretty bad, Rosanna dear," said the doctor. "She will need a very serious operation that cannot be done here. She will have to go to a hospital in Cincinnati where there is a wonderful surgeon, Doctor Branshaw, who specializes in troubles of the spine. He will help her if anyone can. She is in a poor condition anyway, and we will have to look after her pretty sharply to get her in as good a shape physically as we can. If she goes, I will take her myself, and will have her given the best care she can have. What a dear, patient, sweet little girl she is."

"Yes, she is!" agreed Rosanna absently. "Well, if she is as sick as you think, I don't see but what we will just *have* to earn the money some way or other!" Rosanna was very silent all the way home, and that afternoon she retired to the rose arbor and worked as hard as ever she could on the play. It was really taking shape. Rosanna would not show the paper to Helen or to Elise, who had been told the great secret. She wanted to finish it and surprise them.

By four o'clock she was so tired that she could write no longer. She put her tablet away and started to the telephone to call Helen. As she went down the hall the door bell rang. She could see a familiar figure dancing up and down outside the glass door. It was Elise, apparently in a great

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

state of excitement. Rosanna ran and opened the door.

Elise danced in. She caught Rosanna around the waist and whirled her round and round.

"Behold I have arrive, I have arrive!" she sang.

"Of course you have arrived!" said Rosanna. "What makes you feel like this about it?"

"Behold!" said Elise again with a sweeping gesture toward the front door.

Mrs. Hargrave's house-boy, grinning from ear to ear, was coming slowly up the steps bearing a large covered tray. Elise took it from him with the greatest care and set it carefully on a table.

"Approach!" she commanded, and Rosanna, really curious, drew near the mysterious article. Slowly Elise drew off the cover. Under it in all the glory of a golden brown crust, little crinkles all about the edge, sat a pie looking not only good enough to eat, but almost *too* good.

"Peench off a tiny, tiny bit of ze frill," said Elise, pointing to the scallopy edge. "A very tiny peench, and you will see how good. Now I can be the Girl Scout because all the other things I can so well do."

Rosanna took a careful pinch and found the crust light and very flaky and dry.

"Perfectly delicious, Elise!" she pronounced it. "Did you do it all yourself?"

"Of a certainty!" said Elise proudly. "I would not do the which otherwise than as it is so required

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

by the Girl Scouts. And now I am most proud. If you will so kindly take me when you go to the meeting this afternoon, I will offer this to the most adorable little Captain as one more reason the why I should be allowed to join."

"Of course I will take you," said Rosanna. "I was just going to telephone for Helen. If she is ready we will start at once."

"I will go for my hat," said Elise. Then anxiously, "Will the beautiful pie rest here in safety?"

"Yes, indeed; it will be perfectly safe," laughed Rosanna.

Elise was the happiest little girl in all the room at the meeting. Everyone fell in love with her at once, her manners were so gentle and pretty and she was so full of life. Her curls danced and her eyes, and her red lips smiled, and it seemed as though her feet wanted to dance instead of going in a humdrum walk. The Scout Captain and the committee on pie decided that Elise had made the most delicious of its kind.

At the close of the business part of the meeting, the Captain asked as usual if anyone had any news of interest to offer or any requests or questions to ask. It was all Rosanna could do to keep from telling them all about Gwenny and asking for advice and help, but she decided to keep it all to herself until she had finished the play. Then if it turned out to be any good (and it would be easy to tell that by showing it to Uncle Bob) she would

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

take it to the Captain, and if she approved, Rosanna would bring the whole thing up before the next meeting.

On the way home, Helen said to Rosanna, "How are you getting on with your play, Rosanna? Did you work on it this afternoon as you expected to?"

"Yes, I did, and it seems to be coming along beautifully," said Rosanna. "I wanted to ask you about it. Don't you think it would be nice to put in a couple of songs about the Girl Scouts, and perhaps a dance?"

"Simply splendid!" said Helen. "Oh, Rosanna, *do* hurry! I can scarcely wait for you to finish it. Girl Scout songs and a Girl Scout dance! Do you know the Webster twins can dance beautifully? Their mother used to be a dancer on the stage before she married their father, and she has taught them the prettiest dances. They do them together. They are awfully poor, and I don't know if they could afford to get pretty dancing dresses to wear, but I should think we could manage somehow."

"Oh, we will," said Rosanna. "I *do* wish we could have our families help us!"

"Think how surprised they will be if we do this all by ourselves except what Uncle Bob does, and our Scout Captain."

"I don't see that Uncle Bob can do very much," rejoined Rosanna. "But he is real interested and wants to help."

"We ought to let him do whatever he can," said

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Helen. "Father often tells mother that he hopes she notices how much she depends on his superior intellect, but she just laughs and says 'Nonsense! Helen, don't listen to that man at all!' But we must depend on our own superior intellects now."

"It won't take me long to finish the play," said Rosanna. "It is only going to be a one-act play, and if it isn't long enough to make a whole entertainment, we will have to have some recitations and songs before and after it."

"I do think you might let me see what you have written," coaxed Helen.

"I would rather not," pleaded Rosanna. "Somehow I feel as though I couldn't finish it if I should show it to anyone before it is done. I will show it to you the very first one, Helen. Here is one thing you can hear."

She took a crumpled piece of paper from her pocket, and while Helen walked very close beside her commenced: "This is a song sung by two sisters named Elsie and Allis. And you will see what it is all about."

"Is there a tune for it too?" said Helen in great wonder.

"No, I can't make up music," said Rosanna regretfully, "and, anyhow, I think it would come easier to use a tune everybody knows. This goes to the tune of *Reuben, Reuben, I've been Thinking*. You know that?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

“Of course,” said Helen. “Now let’s hear the poetry.”

Rosanna had written:

“Two girls come on the stage, one from the right and one from the left. One is dressed in beautiful clothes, and the other very neat and clean, but in awfully poor things. She has on a thin shawl. She is Elsie. The rich child is Allis. Allis sees Elsie, and sings:

SONG

Air, Reuben, Reuben, I've Been Thinking.

Allis.

Elsie, Elsie, I've been thinking
What a pleasure it would be,
If we had some friends or sisters
Just to play with you and me.

All our time we spend in study
There is no place nice to go.
After school an hour of practice
Oh, I get to hate it so!

Chorus

Just an hour or two of practice,
One and two and three and four;
Add, subtract, or find the tangent;
Everything is just a bore!

Elsie.

Then, dear Allis, when we finish,
We can go and take a walk;

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

That, unless the day is rainy,
Then we just sit down and talk.

And there's not a thing to talk of,
Not a scheme or plan to make,
Not a deed of gentle loving,
Nothing done for Someone's sake.

Chorus

Not a thing for us to aim for —
Not a height for us to climb!
Just the stupid task of living;
Just the bore of passing time!

Enter Girl Scout with many Merit Badges on her sleeve.

Girl Scout.

Did I hear you wish for friendships?
Mates to join in work and play?
Someone true and good and loving
You would chum with every day?

See this uniform? It tells you
You can wear it; be a Scout!
See the sleeve with all the "Merits"?
You could win without a doubt.

Chorus

All —

Oh, what fun we'll have together!
Oh, what work and jolly play!
Walks and talks and happy study
With the Girl Scouts every day.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN Rosanna finished, Helen gave a sigh of delight.

"Rosanna," she said, "it is perfectly beautiful; perfectly *beautiful*! Shall you have the Webster girls sing that?"

"I had not thought of them," confessed Rosanna. "I thought it would be nice for Elise and you, Helen. You both sing so sweetly and you can both dance too."

"I shall be frightened to death," said Helen, trying to imagine herself on a real little stage; at least on a make-believe stage with a curtain stretched across Mrs. Horton's or Mrs. Hargrave's parlor. But frightened or not, she was more than pleased that Rosanna had thought of her, and she had no intention of giving up the part.

She and Elise commenced to practice on the song, and between them made up the prettiest little dance. Mrs. Culver and Mrs. Hargrave were delighted to play their accompaniments and suggest steps. Of course they had to be told something of what was going on, but they were very nice and asked no questions.

A week later Rosanna's little play was finished

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

and ready to show Uncle Robert. Rosanna was as nervous as a real playwright when he has to read his lines to a scowly, faultfinding manager. She invited Helen over to spend the night with her so she could attend the meeting.

Her grandmother was out to a dinner-bridge party, so Rosanna and Helen and Uncle Robert went up to Rosanna's sitting-room and prepared to read her play. And if the truth must be told, Uncle Robert prepared to be a little bored. But as Rosanna read on and on in her pleasant voice, stopping once in awhile to explain things, Uncle Robert's expression changed from a look of patient listening to one of amusement and then to admiration. By the time Rosanna had finished he was sitting leaning forward in his chair and listening with all his might. He clapped his hands.

"Well done, Rosanna!" he said heartily. "I am certainly proud of you! Why, if you can do things of this sort at your age, Rosanna, we will have to give you a little help and instruction once in awhile. Well, well, that is a play as is a play! Don't you think so, Helen?"

"It's just too beautiful!" said Helen with a sigh of rapture. "Just too beautiful! Which is my part, Rosanna?"

"I thought you could be the little girl who discovers the lost paper so the other little Girl Scout's brother will not have to go to prison. That is, if you like that part."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"It is the nicest part of all," sighed Helen.
"What part are you going to take?"

"I didn't think I would take any," said Rosanna.

"Oh, you must be in it!" cried Helen.

"No, Rosanna is right," declared Uncle Robert.
"It is her play, you see, and she will have to be sitting out front at all the rehearsals to see that it is being done as she wants it."

"That is what I thought," said Rosanna. "But you are going to help with everything, are you not, Uncle Robert?"

"Surest thing in the world!" declared Uncle Robert heartily. "But as long as this is all about the Girl Scouts, won't you have to show it to your Girl Scout Captain, or leader, before you go on with it?"

"Of course," said Rosanna.

"Who is she?" asked Uncle Robert carelessly.

"Why, you saw her, Uncle Robert," replied Rosanna. "Have you forgotten the dear sweet little lady who called when I was sick when we were looking for someone very fierce and large?"

"Sure enough!" said Uncle Robert after some thought. If Rosanna had noticed she would have seen a very queer look in his eyes. He had liked the looks of that young lady himself. "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I suppose I will have to go around to her house, and tell her all about it and read it to her."

"Is it written so I can read it?" said Uncle

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Robert, glancing over the pages. "Very neat indeed. Now I will do something for you, if you want me to save you the bother. Just to be obliging, I will take your play and will go around and tell Miss Hooker that I am Rosanna's uncle, and read it to her myself."

"Why, you know her name!" said Rosanna.

"Um — yes," said Uncle Robert. "I must have heard it somewhere. For goodness' sake, Rosanna, this place is like an oven!"

"You *are* red," admitted Rosanna. "Well, I wish you would do that, please, because it makes me feel so queer to read it myself. It won't take you long so we will wait up for you to tell us what she thinks."

"I wouldn't wait up," advised Uncle Robert, getting up. "If she likes me, it may take some time."

"Likes *you*?" said Rosanna.

"I mean likes the way I read it, and likes the play, and likes the idea, and likes everything about it," said Uncle Robert. He said good-bye and hurried off, bearing the precious paper.

The girls sat and planned for awhile, when the doorbell rang. Rosanna could hear the distant tinkle, and saying "Perhaps he is back," ran into the hall to look over the banisters.

She returned with a surprised look on her face.

"What do you suppose?" she demanded of Helen who sat drawing a plan of a stage. "It is Uncle

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Robert, and Miss Hooker is with him. Oh, dear me, I feel so fussed!"

"Come down!" called Uncle Robert, dashing in the door. "I have a surprise for you both."

"No, you haven't! I looked over the banisters," said Rosanna, as the three went down the broad stairs.

Miss Hooker thought the play was so good and she was so proud to think that one of her girls had written it that she was anxious to talk it over at once, and had asked Uncle Robert to bring her right around to see Rosanna and Helen.

They all drew up around the big library table, and Uncle Robert sat next Miss Hooker where he could make suggestions. And Miss Hooker and the girls made a list of characters, and fitted them to different girls in their group. Finally Miss Hooker said there were several places that needed a little changing and would Rosanna trust her to do it with Mr. Horton's help? At this Uncle Robert looked most beseechingly at Rosanna, who, of course, said yes.

"Where will we give it?" asked Helen. "As long as it is a benefit we want a place large enough for lots of people to come. All our families will want to come, and all the Girl Scouts' families, and perhaps some other people besides."

"We will give it here, won't we, Uncle Robert? Grandmother will let us, I'm sure. In the big drawing-room, you know."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Not big enough," declared Uncle Robert, while both girls exclaimed. "Now this is the part I can help about and I have just had a great idea. You all know that big barn of Mrs. Hargrave's? We boys used to play there on rainy days when we were little. The whole top floor is one immense room. We can give our entertainment there. Mrs. Hargrave will give the barn, I know. And for my contribution or part of it, I will see that you have a stage and a curtain and all that."

"How dear of you, Mr. Horton!" said Miss Hooker.

"Oh, Uncle Robert, a curtain that goes up and down?"

"Of course," said Uncle Robert, "and footlights and everything."

"O-o-o-o-h!" sighed both girls, and Miss Hooker looked at Uncle Robert and smiled and he seemed real pleased.

"I think I must go if you will be kind enough to take me home," said Miss Hooker. "Rosanna, you must tell the Girl Scouts about Gwenny at the next meeting, and read your play. Then we will get right to work, for the sooner this is staged, the better. We don't want to interfere with the Christmas work."

After Mr. Horton had taken the tiny little lady home, the girls raced upstairs and went to bed, but it was a long, long time before they could get to sleep. They finally went off, however, and did not

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

hear Uncle Robert when he came home whistling gaily. They dreamed, however, both of them, of acting before vast audiences that applauded all their speeches. And at last Rosanna woke up with a start to find that Helen was clapping her hands furiously and stamping her feet against the foot-board. After Rosanna succeeded in awakening her, they had a good laugh before they went to sleep again.

At breakfast Uncle Robert was full of plans for the Benefit. "Miss Hooker and I went all over your play last night, Rosanna," he said, "and smoothed out the rough places. You know every manuscript has to be corrected. It is on the table in my room. You had better read it over after school, and if it suits your highness I will have it typewritten for you, and you can go ahead. I am going to see about the barn now, on my way down town, and if Mrs. Hargrave is willing — and I am sure she will be — I will get a carpenter to measure for the staging. I suppose," he added, "I ought to ask Miss Hooker to look at the place and get some suggestions from her?"

"Oh, I wouldn't bother to wait for her," said Rosanna, who was wild to see the stage built. "She won't care what you do. If you like, I will tell her how busy you are and that you won't bother to come around to her house any more because you can attend to things just as well yourself."

Uncle Robert looked hard at Rosanna. It was

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

a queer look; sort of the look you would expect from a cannibal uncle who has a little niece that he wants to eat. Rosanna, catching the look, was surprised and quite disturbed. But when Uncle Robert spoke, he merely said, "Thank you, Rosanna; but you see I *do* need Miss Hooker's advice very much indeed. The fact is I will never be able to put this thing through as well as I want to put it through unless I can consult with her every day or so. In fact, if I cannot consult as often as I need to, I will certainly have to give it up. And that would be awful, wouldn't it?"

"Of course it would, Uncle Robert," answered Rosanna. "I just hated to have you bothered."

"I will stagger along under the burden," said Uncle Robert, trying to look like a martyr. "The thing for you to do is to forget how hard I am working and how much help I have to have doing this, and get your girls to studying on their parts."

"Miss Hooker says I am to read it at the Scout meeting next week and then we will give out the parts and let them be learning them."

"All right, sweetness; get after them," said Uncle Robert, kissing Rosanna, and Helen, too, "for luck" he said, and going off whistling.

"I think the play is making Uncle Robert very happy," said Rosanna as the front door slammed and she heard a merry whistle outside. "He is a changed person these last few days."

"That is what often happens," said Helen.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

“Probably he did not have anything to occupy his mind after business hours, so he was unhappy. Mother says it is a serious condition to allow oneself to be in. Now that he has our play to think about, he feels altogether different. I do myself. Do you know it is time to start for school? Let’s be off so we won’t have to hurry, and we will have time to stop for Elise.”

Elise was ready and the three girls sauntered down the street together.

As they passed a great imposing stone house, Elise said, “It is a *château* — what you call castle, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Rosanna, “and a cross old ogre lives in it. He and his sister live there all alone, with lots of maids and men to serve them, and he is so growly-wowly that Minnie says even the grocer boys are afraid of him. That is his car in front of the door. Did you ever see anything so large?”

“Or so lovely?” added Elise. “If he was not so ze what you just call growlee-wowlee, he might carry us to school; not?”

“There he comes,” said Rosanna. “Does he look as though he would carry any little girls *anywhere* unless he carried them off to eat?”

The great carved door opened and an old gentleman came down the steps. He walked with a cane and to the children he seemed very old indeed with his snow white hair and fierce moustaches. He scowled as he came and stopped to switch with his

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

cane at a vine that had straggled up the step. He noticed the three girls approaching, and scowled at them so fiercely that they involuntarily stopped to let him pass. But he was in no hurry to do so. When he had looked them over sufficiently, he looked past them and snorted loudly at something he saw up the street, but when the girls looked around to see what was the matter, there was only a little baby girl playing with a little woolly dog; so they all looked back again at the old gentleman. He seemed to fascinate them.

Three pair of round eyes fixed on him caught the old gentleman's attention.

"Well, well, well!" he said testily. "What do you see? Come, come, speak out!"

Elise drew back but the other two stood their ground, and Rosanna, who had seen him all her life and was at least accustomed to him, said gently:

"We see *you*, sir."

"Ha hum!" sputtered the old gentleman, drawing his fierce white eyebrows together. "What about me, young woman, what about me to stare at?"

Rosanna was distressed. There seemed nothing to do but tell him the truth and that was almost too awful. She smoothed it down as well as she could.

"If you will excuse me for saying so, you looked a little cross," she said, "and — and something must be making you very unhappy."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"It is," said the ogre. "It makes me unhappy to see what a silly no-account world this is; full of small children, and woolly dogs, and things. Kittens! Babies! Chickens! Bah! All making noises! All getting up at daybreak to play and meow and crow. Bah! Of course I am unhappy!"

He crossed the walk, waved the footman back with his cane, stepped painfully into the car, and with his own hand slammed the door shut. But his anger blinded him. He did not take his hand away soon enough, and the heavy door caught it. With a cry of pain, he dropped back on the cushions. The middle finger was crushed and bleeding profusely.

"Heaven protect us!" cried Elise.

The old gentleman was almost fainting. Rosanna did not hesitate. The Girl Scouts had to understand First Aid. She ran up to the car and entered it, tearing up her handkerchief as she did so. Helen, close behind her, was doing the same thing with hers.

CHAPTER V

GENTLY but firmly taking the bleeding finger in her little hand, Rosanna bound it up in the strips of linen, folding them back and forth in quite a professional manner. Helen helped her to tie the bandages. Not until they had finished did they take time to glance up at the old gentleman. He was deathly white and leaned heavily against the cushions.

"Now, sir," said Rosanna, "if you will have your man drive you to a doctor, he will treat it with an antiseptic and it will soon be all right."

The old gentleman commenced to brace up as he saw that the bleeding at least was checked. The girls got out of the car, and the old gentleman with a muttered, "Thank you, thank you," gave an order and the chauffeur drove rapidly away.

"He said *thank you* once for each of us anyway," said Helen.

Elise shuddered. "Your dress!" she said, pointing to Rosanna. Sure enough, Rosanna was spattered with blood.

"Oh, dear, I will have to be late," she said. "Just look at me! I will have to go back and put on a clean dress." She turned reluctantly and

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

ran back home, while the others went on to school and the automobile carried the old gentleman rapidly to the office of his doctor.

While the physician was attending to the hand, the old gentleman, whose name was Harriman, sat and sputtered:

"First time I ever saw any children with a grain of common sense!" he declared. "Little girl acted in a fairly intelligent manner. Suppose it wouldn't happen again. Children never know anything, especially girls. Bah!"

"Oh, yes, they do, Mr. Harriman," said Doctor Greene soothingly. "Oh, yes, they do! Now I have two little girls of my own, and I can tell you —"

"Don't!" said Mr. Harriman. "I make it a point never to listen to fond parents. I am sure the two girls who fixed me up were unusual — very unusual."

"Yes, they were," said the doctor. "You will have an easier time with this hand of yours, thanks to their skill."

"Queer!" said Mr. Harriman. "Seemed to know just what to do."

"Must have been Girl Scouts," said the doctor musingly.

"Girl Scouts? What foolishness is that?" said Mr. Harriman.

The doctor smiled. He thought of his own two daughters.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Ask them about it," he said, rising, and would say no more.

Mr. Harriman limped out.

"What are Girl Scouts?" Mr. Harriman asked his chauffeur as they drove to his office.

"I dunno, sah," said the colored man, starting. He always jumped when Mr. Harriman spoke. Everyone wanted to.

"Idiot!" said Mr. Harriman.

"Yes, sah," said the chauffeur cheerfully.

There seemed nothing else to say.

Mr. Harriman's hand healed very quickly for so old a man, and the doctor stubbornly gave all the credit to Rosanna's first-aid treatment. Mr. Harriman could say "Stuff and nonsense!" as many times as he liked, but it made no difference to the doctor, who smiled and refused to discuss the matter. Mr. Harriman commenced to have a troublesome conscience. He felt as though he should call and thank the little girl who had befriended him to such good purpose, especially as he had known Rosanna's grandmother all her life, but he could not bring himself to do it and contented himself with sending two immense wax dolls and a huge box of candy to Rosanna's house addressed to "The two girls who recently bound up my hand." Rosanna and Helen were quite embarrassed, but Mrs. Horton, who was immensely amused, told them that all that was necessary was a note of thanks, which they wrote and sent off in a great hurry. They

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

didn't want to keep Mr. Harriman waiting. No one did. But he couldn't find out anything about the Girl Scouts because the only persons he asked were the very persons who would never know anything much about anything that had to do with girls or good times or youth or happiness. He asked his old friends at the club, when he felt like talking at all, and so the time went on.

In the meantime, at a Scout meeting Rosanna found herself telling the girls all about Gwenny and the play and the plans for sending the poor little cripple to Cincinnati for the operation which might make her well. It was only *might*. Doctor MacLaren and the other doctors whom he had taken to see Gwenny would only say that it could be *tried*. And the great surgeon, Dr. Branshaw, had written Dr. MacLaren that as soon as the child was in a fit condition she could be brought to him and he would do what he could. He said nothing about the cost, Rosanna noticed, when she read his letter, so she could not tell the girls what the operation would cost. They were all as interested as they could be and promised to work as hard as they could selling tickets, and the ones who were chosen to take parts in the play were very happy about it. As a matter of fact, all of them were to come on the stage, for those who had no speaking parts came on and marched and so had a share in the glory.

And the way they learned their parts! They almost mastered them over night. Rehearsals went

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

on, and the day was set for the entertainment.

There was a great deal of hammering up in Mrs. Hargrave's barn. Mrs. Hargrave and Miss Hooker and Uncle Robert spent a good deal of time up there, but they would not let anyone else in. Even Elise was barred out, and although she wrung her little hands and talked a funny mixture of French and English in her pretty coaxing way, not one of the three would relent and let her peek in. "Wait until it comes time for the dress rehearsals," was all they would say.

A week before the play, a big box came for Uncle Robert. He opened it in Rosanna's room. It was full of tickets nicely printed on yellow pasteboard. Rosanna read them with rapture: the name of the play, *her* play, and at the top in large print,

BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

"You have not said anything about what the performance is to be a benefit *for*," said Rosanna.

"That's all right," said her uncle.

"And you have forgotten to say the price of the tickets," wailed Helen, who was again spending the night.

"Well," said Mr. Horton, "when I went to order those tickets for you, I had an idea. And it was this. I thought as long as this was a benefit performance, why not let it benefit everybody present?"

"How can it do that?" asked Rosanna.

"In this way," said Uncle Robert. "There will

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

be all sorts of people there, because some of the Girl Scouts, Miss Hooker says, are very poor indeed, and some of them belong to families who have plenty of money. So Miss Hooker suggested a very good scheme. Tell the girls when they sell tickets to say that as it is a benefit and so forth and so forth, that the tickets are simply to let the people into the hall. As they go out they are to pay whatever they think it is worth, from five cents up."

"Perfectly splendid!" said Helen, catching the idea at once.

"I don't know," answered Rosanna. "They will have seen the performance and suppose everybody will feel as though it is worth only a nickel?"

"Oh, they won't feel like that at all, Rosanna," said Helen. "I think every single person will think it is worth a quarter. Think if they would all pay twenty-five cents!"

"I know several who expect to pay a dollar," said Uncle Robert.

"If they only will," cried Rosanna, almost sobbing, "Gweny can go to Cincinnati this very winter! I think it is a good idea, Uncle Robert. After all, it is a good thing that you did consult with Miss Hooker, even if it *has* taken a lot of your time. I think you have been so kind."

"Oh, I haven't minded," said Uncle Robert in a generous way.

"Why, you must have minded," went on Ro-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

sanna. "I have kept track all I could, because I was so much obliged to you, and you have been over there at Miss Hooker's house consulting—well, you had to go over five nights last week, and Miss Hooker is always saying, 'I had a telephone today from your uncle.' You must be tired to death. I nearly told Miss Hooker so, but I thought it might sound rude."

"You are right about that, Rosanna; it would have been very rude indeed, excessively rude I may say," said Mr. Horton with some haste. "I can scarcely think of anything worse for you to say. My sainted Maria!"

"I didn't say it," Rosanna assured him, "and the thing is so nearly over now, only a week more, that it really doesn't matter."

"Not a particle!" said Mr. Horton. "But I wish you would promise me that you won't say anything of the sort. Not that it matters, but I seem to feel nervous."

"Of course I will promise," agreed Rosanna. "I love Miss Hooker but of course I love you more, and I just do hate to have you bothered."

"It is mighty nice of you, sweetness, but you must not worry about me at all. Now to change the conversation, as the man said when he had nearly been hanged by mistake, you give these tickets out to your Girl Scouts and tell them to offer them to the people who would be most likely to give more than a nickel. It ought to be easy.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

They are to say that the benefit will cost them five cents or up as they leave the hall. With your permission, I will make a few remarks and tell them about Gwenny. But we will not mention her by name, because if there should be a newspaper reporter lurking around he would put it in the papers and that would be very embarrassing."

After Uncle Robert had gone out the girls made the tickets up in little bundles, one for each girl in the group. Their own they spread out on the table, planning how they would dispose of them.

"Whom shall you sell to first?" asked Helen.

"Mr. Harriman," said Rosanna quietly.

Helen dropped her tickets. "Dear *me*, Rosanna!" she cried. "I would be too afraid to offer him a ticket."

"I am not," said Rosanna. "I would do more than that for Gwenny, and I am not afraid of him at all. Not even if he roars. And he has lots and lots of money. I shouldn't wonder at all that he will be one of the dollar ones if he comes. And he has *got* to come if I go after him."

"Dear *me*!" said Helen again, quite awed. "You are brave. Shall I come with you?"

"If you like," replied Rosanna. "We will go right after school tomorrow."

The interview with Mr. Harriman took place as planned the first thing after school. School let out at two o'clock, and it was half-past when the girls mounted the steps of the grim old fortress in

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

which Mr. Harriman lived. Now it happened that half past two was a very dark hour for Mr. Harriman because at about that time he was always in the clutch of a bad attack of indigestion brought on daily because he would *not* mind his doctor and omit pickles and sweets from his bill of fare. At this time he read the morning paper and reviled the world at large. His sister always left him with the excuse that she wanted to lie down, and he was alone with his abused stomach and his pepsin tablets and his thoughts.

The two girls entered the room and waited for him to speak.

Mr. Harriman looked up from his reading with a dark scowl. Most of the newspaper was on the floor where he had thrown it to stamp on. He always felt better when he stamped on the editorials that displeased him most. It seemed to soothe his feelings. He managed to grunt, "'Dafternoon! 'Dafternoon!" when he saw the two girls advance across his library, and then he waited, looking over the tops of a very grubby pair of glasses for them to state their errands. It was Rosanna who spoke first, although generally Helen was the spokesman. But Helen was frankly afraid of the grouchy old gentleman, while Rosanna was too anxious to help Gwenny to be afraid of anyone. So she said, "Please excuse us, Mr. Harriman, if we have interrupted your reading."

"Well, you have!" said Mr. Harriman gruffly.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Whadder you want? Sell me chances on a doll's carriage or sofy pillow? Who's getting up your fair? Meth'dist, 'Piscopal? Here's a dime."

He held out the money, which Rosanna took gently and laid on the table beside him.

"Thank you," she said. "We don't want any money today. We have come to tell you about an entertainment we are going to give. First if you don't mind I think I will just shine up your glasses. You can't see to think through them the way they are," and as Helen looked on, expecting to see Rosanna snapped in two any second, she held out her hand for the glasses, shaking out a clean pocket handkerchief as she did so. No one was more surprised than Mr. Harriman himself when he took off the smeary spectacles and handed them to Rosanna, who silently polished them and handed them back. They *were* better; Mr. Harriman acknowledged it with a grunt.

"Girls are real handy," said Rosanna with her sweet smile.

"Grrrrrr!" from Mr. Harriman. "Whadded you want to tell me?" but his voice certainly seemed a shade less gruff.

Rosanna, speaking distinctly and as carefully as though she was explaining to a small child, told the old man about Gwenny and the benefit and after that, as he sat perfectly still looking at her through unnaturally shiny glasses, she went on to tell him about the Girl Scouts. You couldn't tell whether

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

he cared a snap about it, but at all events he listened, and Helen and Rosanna both thought it was a good sign. They did not dare to glance at each other, but Rosanna went on talking until she felt that she had told him all that he would want to know if he had been a regular sort of a human being instead of a grouchy, cross old man who seemed to delight in scaring everyone away from him.

"That's all," said Rosanna finally, smiling up into the scowling old face.

There was a long silence.

"Grrrrrr!" said Mr. Harriman again. "So you want me to come to your show, do you? Haven't been to a show for forty years! No good! Silly!"

"Ours isn't," declared Helen, suddenly finding her voice. "Our entertainment is perfectly splendid!"

"Perfectly splendid!" mimicked Mr. Harriman. "Sounds just like a woman! All alike, regardless of age. Grrrrrr!"

"You will come, won't you?" asked Rosanna. "Please do! You see it is only a nickel if you do not think it is worth more."

"A great many persons are going to pay a quarter," hinted Helen.

"All right, all right!" said Mr. Harriman. "You are less objectionable than most children. I will come if I can remember it."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Suppose I come after you?" suggested Rosanna, remembering what she had said to Helen about getting Mr. Harriman if she had to come after him.

"All right, all right! Let it go at that! I know your sex! You will forget all about your agreement by the time you reach the next corner. If you come after me, I will go to your show. In the Hargrave barn, eh? Anything to sit on, or shall I bring a chair?"

"No, sir; Uncle Robert has fixed seats and everything. And I will come for you quite early because I have to be there doing my part."

"That's nuff!" grunted Mr. Harriman, nodding curtly. "'Dafternoon!" He resumed his paper, and as he caught the opening sentences of the article before him, there came a sound like the grating of teeth and the noise of a large boiler that is about to explode.

The girls said, "Good afternoon!" in two small voices and went out as quickly as they could.

Helen breathed a sigh of relief when she reached the outer air.

"Rosanna, you are certainly a very brave girl," she said. "I am glad to get out alive. Every minute I expected to hear him say, 'Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the breath of an English-mun!'"

Rosanna laughed.

"He is pretty awful," she granted. "But I mean to make him come. I think it will do him

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

good to see that play, and I shall certainly go after him. If he thinks I am going to forget about him, he is greatly mistaken."

"Let's try to get rid of all our tickets this afternoon. You know we are to meet Uncle Robert at the barn at five o'clock to see the theatre he has fixed up. Oh, Helen, I am so excited!"

For a couple of hours the girls repeated the story of Gwenny and the benefit until they could say it by heart. The tickets went so fast that they were sorry that they did not have twice as many. At a quarter of five they hurried back to Mrs. Hargrave's, where Elise was waiting for them and Uncle Robert soon joined them. There was a short wait then, because he refused to unlock the door before Miss Hooker arrived although the girls begged and begged, assuring him that she wouldn't mind.

Finally they heard the tap, tap, tap of her tiny shoes on the old brick walk, and round the corner she came, looking more dimply and dainty and altogether beautiful than ever. Uncle Robert looked as though he could eat her, but somehow it was not the sort of look he had given Rosanna that other time. Not at all! Rosanna noticed it.

CHAPTER VI

THE stairs were broad and easy, and the girls ran up after Uncle Robert who proceeded to fit a large key in the lock of the big door at the head of the stairs. It was a very fine stable, built many, many years ago, and finished outside and inside with great care. The walls were all sealed or finished with narrow strips of varnished wood. As the door swung open, the three girls stood dumb with amazement. Then "Oh, *darling* Uncle Robert!" cried Rosanna, and threw herself into his arms.

Uncle Robert looked over her head at Miss Hooker and smiled.

"Glad if you like it, kiddie," he said. "It is my contribution to little Gwenny. And Doctor Rick told me to tell you that he would send some music for his share."

"Oh, Helen, Helen, isn't that *splendid*?" cried Rosanna. "Now we won't have to have a Victrola! It will be like a real theatre."

"Just exactly," said Helen absently. She could not give very much thought to the orchestra when the little theatre claimed her attention.

There was a real stage, and before it a long green tin that the girls knew concealed the footlights.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

A splendid curtain hung before them, painted in a splashy way with a landscape. To the girls it seemed a rare work of art. Well, the sign painter who had done it was rather proud of himself, so it *must* have been all right.

They walked down the aisle between rows of nice new benches, made with comfortable backs. Mr. Horton left them and went around back of the stage. Immediately there was a sound of ropes squeaking, and the curtain rose as majestically as though it was the curtain of a real theatre. And there was the stage! The same accommodating sign painter had painted a back drop and "flies" as they are called. It was a woodland scene. Trees were the thing that accommodating sign painter could do best, and he had made lots of them, as green as green! He had also painted two canvas covered boxes so that you could scarcely tell them from real rocks.

"Isn't that pretty nifty looking scenery?" asked Uncle Robert proudly. "It only goes to show that there is a lot of kindness floating around loose in this work-a-day old world. The man who painted all this knew Gwenny's mother when she was a girl, and when I asked for his bill he said he had done it all Sundays and nights and it was his contribution. He wouldn't take a cent. Doing it nights is why some of the trees look sort of bluish but I don't think it hurts, do you?"

"What a nice, *nice* man!" exclaimed Miss

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Hooker. "I should say it *doesn't* hurt! To think of his working nights after painting all day long. I should admire those trees if they were a bright *purple!*"

"Of course you would," said Uncle Robert softly. "You are like that."

Rosanna was hurt. "Why, Uncle Robert! She doesn't mean that she would just as *soon* like a purple tree as a green one. She means how nice it was of the man."

"Thank you, Rosanna; it is all perfectly clear to me now," smiled Uncle Robert. "Perfectly clear." He looked again at Miss Hooker and she smothered a little smile behind her little handkerchief.

They hated to go out of the theatre and see Uncle Robert lock the door. Then they separated. Elise danced off to the house, Miss Hooker and Helen went down the street together, and Uncle Robert and Rosanna cut across the garden. Rosanna's heart was full. She wanted *everybody* to be happy.

"Uncle Robert," she said, "sometimes I wish that you were going to get married after awhile. If you were only going to marry Miss Hooker or some young lady just like her, so little and sweet!"

"Well, it is worth considering," said Uncle Robert. "I wonder now, just for the sake of argument, that is, if I *should* do it to accommodate you, I wonder if Miss Hooker *would* marry me."

"Oh, no," said Rosanna. "She wouldn't *think* of it."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Ugh!" said Uncle Robert. It sounded as though someone had knocked all the air out of him.

"No," continued Rosanna. "We were talking about Minnie getting married one day, and I said it was the only wedding I was ever apt to have anything to do with because I had heard you say many times that you were not a marrying man."

"What did she say?" asked Uncle Robert in a sort of strangled voice which Rosanna, skipping along at his side, failed to notice.

"Oh, she said, 'How interesting!' and I said, 'Isn't it? Because he is nicer than anyone I know, but he says that girls never cut any figure in his young life except to play with.'"

"What did she say then?" demanded Mr. Horton.

"Nothing at all," answered Rosanna, "but she is sensible too, because the next time I was there, she asked more about Minnie, and then she said she had decided never to marry. She said she liked to be polite to men and help them pass the time, and to assist them in worthy works, but further than that she despised the whole lot of them, especially blonds." Rosanna looked up to see what color hair Uncle Robert had, and noticed a very queer look on his face.

"You look so queer, Uncle Robert," she said tenderly. "Don't you feel well?"

"No, I don't," said Uncle Robert. "I think if you will excuse me I will take a walk."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"How *do* you feel?" persisted Rosanna.

"I feel — I feel *queer*," said Uncle Robert. "I feel sort of as though I had been gassed."

He turned abruptly and went down the walk, leaving Rosanna staring after him. At dinner, however, Uncle Robert declared that he was all right, so Rosanna stopped worrying.

Everything went rushing along. And everything went beautifully, thanks to the energy everybody put into their work. A couple of days before the day of the entertainment Uncle Robert appeared with a copy of the programs that he had had printed. All the Girl Scouts, when Rosanna brought it to the rehearsal, read it until the paper was quite worn out. At the bottom of the page, after the program part, was printed plainly, *Given by the Girl Scouts of Group II*. Whoever saw the program at all could not fail to see that they were all in it, one as much as another.

At last the great day came! It was Saturday, of course. No other day would be possible for busy school girls. Directly after supper, the Scouts commenced to file into the theatre by ones and twos and threes. They gathered in the dressing-rooms back of the stage, where they sat or stood in solemn groups. Helen and Elise had arrived, and as Rosanna started across the garden she happened to think of Mr. Harriman. She could not suppress a groan of dismay as she remembered her promise to go after him. There was no time to get

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Helen or Elise to go. She looked wildly up and down for some other Girl Scout, but there was not one in sight. If she did not go, Mr. Harriman would indeed think that all women were alike. So she flitted down the street looking like a good fairy in her shimmering blue dress, with the tiny wreath of forget-me-nots banding her dark hair. She had not taken time to put on her blue evening coat, with its broad bands of white fox fur, but held it round her shoulders with both hands as she ran.

Mr. Harriman was at home, the footman said, but he was engaged; had company for dinner, and they had not quite finished. Would she wait?

Rosanna said she was sorry but she would have to go right in and speak to Mr. Harriman. So she passed the pompous servant and at the dining-room door a still more pompous butler, and stepped into the presence of Mr. Harriman and his guests.

Miss Harriman, a thin, scared little old lady, sat at the head of the table. Opposite her, busy with a large dish of plum pudding, sat Mr. Harriman. His two guests sat on either side of him. They were old too, so three white-haired old gentlemen turned and looked at Rosanna as she entered and dropped a curtsey.

"Devening! There you are again! Grrrrrr! Didn't forget, did you? Bah! Want I should go to show?" said Mr. Harriman, partly to Rosanna and partly to the others.

"Yes, sir; this is the night," said Rosanna.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"What's this?" asked one of the gentlemen, who looked as though he could not have said *grrrrrrr* or *bah* to save his life.

"That's a Girl Scout," said Mr. Harriman. "Told you at the club that I would find out about 'em. Here's a live one. Caught her myself." He acted quite pleased.

"Shall I wait and walk over with you, Mr. Harriman," asked Rosanna, "or will you come as soon as you can? You see I must be over there very early."

"I will come m'self," said Mr. Harriman. "Want piece puddin'? No? S'good! I will come later. Won't break my word. Didn't break yours. Bring these fellows along if they have any money."

"How much will we need?" said the third old gentleman, laughing.

"Anything from a nickel up," replied Rosanna.

"Cost you a quarter," said Mr. Harriman. "Cosgrove, here, will have to pay thirty-five cents. Based on income tax!"

Rosanna, watching him, thought she saw a real twinkle in Mr. Harriman's eye. She warned them to be on time and promised to save three seats for them in the front row. Then she went skipping happily off. Three instead of one to come to the play, two quarters, and thirty-five cents made eighty-five cents right there! It was enough to make *anyone* skip. When she reached the barn

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

people were filing up the broad stairs, and the room was already half full. Uncle Robert stood near the door nodding and smiling and telling the Girl Scout ushers where to seat one and another. Rosanna hurriedly wrote "Taken" on the backs of three tickets, and laid them on three spaces on the bench nearest the stage. As people kept coming, she commenced to wonder if there would be seats enough. She whispered her fear to Uncle Robert.

"That's all right," he said. "I have one of the box stalls downstairs full of camp chairs, and the sign painter is here to help me bring them up if they are needed."

"You think of everything," said Rosanna fondly, then set herself to watch the door for Mr. Harriman. It was not long before she heard the clump, clump, clump of his cane and the heavy footsteps of his two friends. She escorted them proudly to their seats, and left them nodding appreciatively at the bright curtain and all the fittings of the little theatre. Then she hurried around back of the stage.

"They came, eighty-five cents' worth!" she whispered to Helen.

"What do you mean?"

"Mr. Harriman is here and two of his friends," said Rosanna. "And Mr. Harriman and one friend will give twenty-five cents, and the other will give thirty-five."

"Good!" said Helen. "How do I look? Is the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

place filling up? Have you seen the music Doctor Rick sent? Five pieces! They have just come. They are down in the feed room getting their instruments out. Oh, I am so excited! And it is all to make Gwenny well."

"I am going out now," said Rosanna. "I wish you could all sit out in front. It does not seem fair for me to do so."

"It is fair," Helen assured her. "Didn't you write the whole play? Of course you must see that it is played right."

When Rosanna appeared she glanced at Mr. Harriman and was surprised to have him beckon her to him.

"Sit here," he said, making a small but sufficient space between himself and one of his friends—the thirty-five cent one, Rosanna noticed. She sat down, and as she did so the music started off with a flourish. How splendidly it sounded! It quite drowned the sound of people entering. Uncle Robert, and the sign painter, and a couple of brothers belonging to one of the girls were busy bringing camp chairs and placing them in the wide aisle and along the sides. Two bright red spots burned on Rosanna's cheeks.

She looked at her wrist watch. In five minutes it would begin. And it did.

A row of Girl Scouts in crisp, natty looking uniforms, marching according to size, so that the large girls were in the center of the stage, came

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

out before the curtain and sang one of their best Girl Scout songs. Their voices were so sweet and they sang so well that they had to return and give an encore. Mr. Harriman pounded with his cane.

Then the Webster girls, dressed as fairies, came out and danced what the program called the Moonbeam Dance, and behold, Uncle Robert had fixed a spot light so they looked pink and white and purple and blue by turns and it was like a real theatre.

There was so much applause arter this that Rosanna could not help wondering if it was a good strong barn!

Then there was a short pause while the orchestra played.

As it ended, Uncle Robert appeared before the curtain. He looked so beautiful to Rosanna in his evening dress with his merry eyes and pleasant smile, that her eyes filled with tears of pride. And he made a beautiful simple little speech. He told the audience a great deal about the Girl Scouts and all the good the organization was doing for the girls and others as well, and then he told of the little lame girl, suffering so hopelessly and so patiently, and how these Girl Scouts had determined to help her. He told them there was no price set on the tickets, because some might feel like giving ten cents or even a quarter or so but that no one was *asked* to leave more than a nickel. And then he called their attention to the beautiful

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

curtain and told them that that and the scenery was the gift of a friend who was a sign painter, who had done it Sundays and nights after work as his contribution to the benefit, and everybody clapped furiously, and Mr. Harriman and the thirty-five cent gentleman commenced to nudge each other behind Rosanna. *She* was sitting on the very front edge of the bench.

Then Uncle Robert said:

"After another short selection by the orchestra there will be a play written by one of the Girl Scouts. We hope that you will enjoy it." He bowed, and stepped behind the curtain, while everybody clapped and Mr. Harriman thumped with his cane.

As the orchestra struck up, the thirty-five cent gentleman leaned over to Mr. Harriman and said, "What are you going to do about it, Dick?"

"Do 'swell 's you do," said Mr. Harriman.

"Just as much?" questioned the thirty-five cent gentleman.

"Yes," said Mr. Harriman, snorting. "And fifty over!"

"I will break even with you both," said the third gentleman, leaning across.

Mr. Cosgrove took out a check book and a fountain pen and commenced to write. Mr. Harriman leaned behind Rosanna and watched.

"Poh! Hum! Grrrrrr! Piker!" he said, and Mr. Cosgrove, laughing, tore up his check and wrote

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

another which he handed to Mr. Harriman. Rosanna did not think it would be polite to look, but wondered what in the world they were doing when they should have been listening to the music.

"S'all right," said Mr. Harriman. "Girl's pretty lame, isn't she, Rosanna?"

"Gweny can't walk at all," replied Rosanna, "and even at night her back hurts so she can't sleep."

"Poor little broken pot," said the third gentleman softly. "A pity that the hand of the Potter slipped."

"Save your poetry, Bristol!" grunted Mr. Harriman. "This talks better." He struck the check book with his pen, and Mr. Bristol, borrowing a page, wrote busily as the curtain rose.

Rosanna, hoping they would forget business for awhile, bent her eyes on the stage.

CHAPTER VII

As the play progressed Rosanna commenced to doubt her own senses. It did not seem possible that she could have written anything so good and so interesting.

When the act ended, there was a louder burst of applause than at any other time, and to Rosanna's horror some one in the back of the room commenced to cry, "Author, author!" Rosanna did not realize at first that they meant her and was looking around the room with a great deal of interest when she felt both Mr. Harriman and Mr. Cosgrove pushing her to her feet. She stood up because they shoved her up, and she did not know what to do next.

Then the most amazing thing of all happened.

Mr. Harriman rose to his feet and taking Rosanna firmly by the arm as though she might dash off any instant, he started toward the three little steps at one side of the stage. Up these steps he sternly piloted Rosanna, while everyone in the room clapped and clapped again. All of Louisville knew Mr. Harriman, and when everybody saw that *he* was escorting the little girl who had written the play, they sat quite still to see what would happen

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

next. When they reached the stage and stood facing the audience, someone called, "Speech, speech!" but that was 'way, 'way beyond Rosanna, who was perfectly overcome anyway. She looked pleadingly at Mr. Harriman, who knew what she meant, and took pity on her.

"Hum, grrrrrr," he commenced. "Ladies and gentlemen, this little lady, who is the author and producer of the play you have just seen, asks me to speak for her. She thanks you for your appreciation, and for the help you are giving to herself and these other generous Girl Scouts in their efforts to assist a girl less fortunate than themselves. You have heard about the little cripple who is to be benefited by the work of these girls, and I think we, the audience fortunate enough to be present at this memorable occasion, will esteem it a pleasure to do what we can toward making it possible for this little sufferer to obtain a possible cure through a very serious and expensive operation. We thank you. Grrrrrr!" He *glared* at Mr. Cosgrove and Mr. Bristol, and bowed. Rosanna dipped a hasty curtsy, and they went off the stage again as everybody clapped and the music struck up the jolliest piece they knew. The entertainment was over!

Back with Mr. Cosgrove and Mr. Bristol, each old gentleman shook hands with Rosanna and started for the door, where Uncle Robert, intent on the most important part of all, sat at the table on which was a shoe box with a slot cut in the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

cover. He was smiling and beaming and saying, "Thank you!" over and over as people congratulated him on Rosanna's play. Miss Hooker stood beside him looking so sweet and true and pretty that when Mr. Harriman came up and looked at her, and started to say "Grrrrrr," it actually sounded like a purr! He hastily shoved something white through the slot, and Mr. Cosgrove and Mr. Bristol followed him, looking very guilty.

Then Mr. Harriman turned back.

"Absolutely confidential, Horton! No newspapers!" he said.

"Absolutely, sir, and thank you," said Uncle Robert, bowing to the three. He commenced to suspect something!

Miss Hooker stooped to whisper something to Robert. As soon as the last person had left the hall, he obeyed the whisper, and taking the precious box, which was sealed with red sealing wax where the cover went on, he went behind the scenes. All the girls were there, as well as the sign-painter and the two brothers. These three looked immensely relieved when a fourth member of their sex appeared. Mrs. Hargrave was there too, and she was inviting everyone to walk over to her house and have something to eat. She said she believed it was customary after the first presentation of a play.

When some of the girls said they would have to go home with their folks on account of getting home

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

with escort, Mrs. Hargrave at once added that she had arranged with Mrs. Horton to send the girls home in their automobiles.

So very soon they were all in Mrs. Hargrave's immense dining-room, sitting in chairs ranged round the room and being served chicken bouillon and sandwiches, and fruit salad, and olives, and cocoa, and ice-cream with whipped cream on top. All they could eat of each thing too!

"I can't wait to see the inside of that box," said Mrs. Hargrave after all the Girl Scouts and the sign painter and the two brothers had said good night and thank you, and had gone. "What if these children of ours *do* have to sleep half the day tomorrow? Telephone your mother, Miss Hooker, that you are here with me, and that you will be home presently, and we will go into the library and watch Robert count the money. And whatever is lacking, when it comes to settling for that operation, Mrs. Horton and I intend to make up."

Robert Horton laughed.

"I have an idea that you are on the safe side of the bargain, dear lady," he said. "I think this box will surprise us."

"How much do you suppose is in it?" asked Miss Hooker as she started for the telephone. "A hundred dollars?"

"Five hundred at the least," answered Uncle Robert.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Everybody started to hurry for the library at that as though the money in the box would have to be counted as rapidly as possible for fear it might fly away.

Uncle Robert happened to sit beside Miss Hooker again, but Rosanna sat on the other side. He cut the sealing wax and opened the box. There was all sorts of silver money there *except nickels!* There was not one nickel. Dimes, quarters, fifty-cent pieces, and silver dollars, but not a nickel.

Uncle Robert placed the coins in neat piles, then he commenced to stack the paper money. After he had done this, he sorted out five checks, which he laid by themselves quite respectfully, face down.

Then he drew out a pencil and paper and commenced to count. No one spoke. At the last, still keeping the faces of the five checks out of sight, he added them in, covered the paper with his hand, and looked up. He seemed dazed.

"How much do you think?" he demanded.

"Don't make us guess, Robert," said his mother.

"Two thousand, two hundred and thirty-four dollars and twenty-five cents," he said slowly.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Hargrave sharply.

Miss Hooker gave a gasp. The girls, perfectly round-eyed, sat silent.

"There it is!" said Mr. Horton. "Mr. Bristol and Mr. Cosgrove each gave a check for five hundred dollars, and Mr. Harriman wrote his for five hundred and fifty."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Mrs. Horton sniffed.

"Dick Harriman never gave twenty-five dollars to anything like this in his life," she said.

"Well, here is his check," declared her son.

"So *that* is where the fifty came in," said Rosanna, finding her voice. She repeated the conversation she had heard. Everybody laughed.

"Poor Dick!" said Mrs. Hargrave. "He doesn't feel well, and his bark is so bad that I doubt if anyone ever before stopped to see what his bite was like until Rosanna tried. I reckon he is happier tonight than he has been for a long while. He would think it was a great joke, too, to cajole Henry Bristol and Clinton Cosgrove into giving that money. Well, they can afford it many times over, so it will do them all good."

"Too bad Rick MacLaren isn't here," said Uncle Robert. "He has a sick patient on hand, and couldn't come. I will tell him the first thing in the morning."

"And these girls *must* go to bed," said Mrs. Horton. "Are you going to stay with Rosanna, Helen?"

"I think I will just have to go home and tell mother and father about it if there is any way for me to get there," replied Helen.

"If Miss Hooker feels like the extra walk, we will take you on our way to her house," said Uncle Robert eagerly.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"I would love it," said Miss Hooker obligingly. Rosanna marvelled.

Miss Hooker lived blocks away from Helen, in the opposite direction, but as the older people said nothing, Rosanna kept silence. At all events the benefit was over, and her Uncle Robert would no longer feel obliged to spend all his time with a mere girl, because no matter how lovely, Rosanna knew that he didn't care for girls.

A number of girls ranging in age from twelve to sixteen were busy repeating in a number of homes that night just how they had felt at different times during the evening, and explaining to less fortunate brothers and sisters how good everything had tasted afterwards. And Sunday morning, a great many mothers had a difficult time getting their Girl Scout daughters awake.

Rosanna had a long talk with Uncle Bob. She wanted to know what was going to be done about the money.

"I have been thinking about that," said Uncle Robert. "I will put it in the bank the first thing tomorrow morning. I shall put it in the office bank for safe keeping until then."

"Do you suppose it will take all of it for Gwenny's operation?" asked Rosanna.

"No, I do not," Robert replied, "but of course Doctor Branshaw is a very high priced specialist, and he sets his own fees."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"If he knew that Gwenny was a poor little girl and that the Girl Scouts were taking care of her, I wonder if it would make any difference?"

Uncle Robert shook his head. "I don't believe I would ask a favor of anyone, now that you have earned such a lot of money. Just go ahead and pay her way like good sports. At that, with the hospital charges and nurses paid, I think you may have a little left over. If we have, we will have to find the best way to spend it for Gwenny. I want to consult with Miss Hooker about it later if she is not too tired."

"Consult again! Oh, *poor* Uncle Robert!" said Rosanna compassionately. "I thought that was all over with."

"It is not as painful as you seem to think," said Uncle Robert dryly. "At all events, my health is not breaking under the strain. I never knew you to fuss so, Rosanna. Just what have you up your sleeve anyhow? Don't you like your Captain after all?"

"Oh, I perfectly *love* her," cried Rosanna warmly. "You don't know how sweet she is, Uncle Robert! And she is such a good Captain. Every girl in the patrol loves her and will do anything in the world for her."

Seeing that Uncle Robert appeared to be listening, Rosanna went on warming to her subject.

"At the Rally, I heard one of the ladies say that our Captain was considered the best one in all the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

city. And she looks so young; just like one of the girls when she gets into her Scout uniform. When we are on hikes, she runs around and plays with us and joins all our games. Oh, yes, Uncle Robert, I do love her dearly!"

"I don't know but what I do myself," admitted Uncle Robert unexpectedly.

"Why, Uncle *Robert!*" said Rosanna in a shocked tone. "What a thing for you to say!"

Uncle Robert wondered if he had made a mistake. It was not the sort of a remark he would want repeated. So he made another mistake.

"Wasn't it? A joke, Rosanna; just a merry jest. Thought you would laugh over it. Ha ha! Ha ha!"

"Ha ha!" repeated Rosanna to be agreeable. Sometimes Uncle Robert was rather disappointing. "But she is lovely anyway, and has loads and loads of friends, and, Uncle Robert, I think she has a sweetheart because boxes and boxes of flowers come to her, and she just keeps a little one to wear, and sends all the rest to the hospital. And lovely books come by mail and the fattest letters! One had poetry in it, too. I could tell by the shape of the writing down the page."

"Don't snoop, Rosanna," said Uncle Robert sharply.

"I didn't, Uncle Robert," said Rosanna in a hurt tone. "She was sitting close to me on the sofa, and I couldn't help seeing. She liked it too, be-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

cause she smiled so sweetly and showed all her dimples, even the one that almost *never* comes out."

"What a little ray of sunshine you are, Rosanna!" said her uncle strangely.

"Thank you; a Girl Scout *ought* to be," replied Rosanna.

"Well, you are, all right, sweetness," said Uncle Robert. He sighed deeply almost as though the ray of sunshine had not come his way at all. He kissed Rosanna and then sat her down rather hard in a deep chair. "I don't know when I have felt so cheered up. And now, if you would like to call the garage and order the little car for me, I will go around to see Doctor MacLaren and tell him the good news of our fortune. And on second thoughts, I don't believe I will have to consult with Miss Hooker at all. I think perhaps you are right. I have bothered her enough."

"She has been *very* polite and kind about it all, hasn't she?" asked Rosanna.

"Most polite and kind," Mr. Horton agreed. "But we don't want to wear her kindness out, do we, Rosanna? I will go see Rick, and in a day or two my part of this affair will be finished. And I won't have to bother anybody. I am thinking of a little trip out West, Rosanna. I wish you could go with me."

"I wish I could!" said Rosanna, "but grandmother wouldn't want me to leave school, and be-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

sides I couldn't leave the Scouts just now. Where do you think of going, Uncle Robert?"

"Nowhere in particular, unless—" he thought a moment. "It might be fun to look up some place where they had never heard of the Girl Scouts."

"Perfectly splendid!" said Rosanna. "*That* would be doing a good deed. You could tell the people about us, and start a patrol. I must tell Miss Hooker about this; she will think it is so nice of you. She appreciates kind acts, even if she doesn't like men."

"It is not worth mentioning, Rosanna," answered Uncle Robert. "Besides, I didn't have just that in mind. However, I hear the car and will leave you before — before I do anything I regret."

He went off, and Rosanna watched him through the window as he started his car. He was real jerky with it, and it sputtered and missed, and went off with a leap.

"He is all tired out," thought Rosanna.

CHAPTER VIII

TIME passed, a great many things happening. Gwenny, accompanied by her mother (there being plenty of money for everything), was taken away to the place of her great trial. When the question arose as to what should be done with Mary and Tommy and Myron and Luella and Baby Christopher, Rosanna thought of Minnie, always so good and kind. She went to see her, and the result was that Minnie volunteered to stay at Gwenny's and run the little house and take care of the children as long as Mrs. Harter was needed in Cincinnati. Both Doctor MacLaren and Mr. Horton went with Mrs. Harter and Gwenny, and made the journey as comfortable as they possibly could. The great Doctor Branshaw, after seeing his patient, said that she must have at least a week of rest under his own eye before he would be willing to try the operation. So Gwenny was settled in a sunny room at the hospital where she at once became the pet of the ward and Doctor MacLaren and Mr. Horton came home.

Late in the afternoon, the very next Sunday, Mr. Horton came into the house looking the picture of gloom. He scarcely spoke to his mother and

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Rosanna but rushed up to his room and immediately there was a sound of things being dragged around, and many footsteps. And the door opened and shut a great many times. Mrs. Horton wondered what that boy was up to now and went on reading. But Rosanna listened with a black suspicion growing in her mind.

And, sure enough, Mr. Horton came down presently to announce that he was going away for a few weeks. He was getting stale, he said, and needed a little change. When he saw Rosanna's round eyes fixed on him, he looked away but repeated that he felt stale.

"It is that War," said his mother, as though the war should be severely reprimanded. "Before you went into that war, you were always contented. Now nothing contents you for long."

"Perhaps you are right," admitted Robert absently. "At all events I can be spared from the office just now better than at any other time, and I am going to go away."

And so he did an hour later. Mrs. Hargrave and Elise came in presently to take Sunday night luncheon.

"Where is Robert?" asked Mrs. Hargrave, seeing that no place was set for him.

"Gone off for a vacation," said his mother.

"Dear me, isn't he well?" asked Mrs. Hargrave.

"Perfectly, but he just took one of his notions and went."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Anything — er — happened, do you suppose?" questioned Mrs. Hargrave. "Anything — er, *you* know. Misunderstanding?"

"Possibly," answered Mrs. Horton. "That is what I suspect. But I don't *know* anything."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried Mrs. Hargrave, folding her fine old hands together. "It is too bad! Can't something be done? Why, Robert is the finest boy in this world! He is just what I dream my son would have been if I had had one. Do you suppose one could say anything to the other person?"

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Horton. "I don't *know*, you see. I only suspect."

So Uncle Robert went away, and Gwenny was off at the hospital, and Rosanna and Helen spent all their time drilling Elise in the requirements of the Tenderfoot examination. Elise was quick to learn, but she found more difficulty in learning this because her knowledge of English was of course limited. The girls were anxious to make a brilliant showing with their recruit.

Over and over they drilled her in the Tenderfoot examination, at the last requiring her to write the answers to the examination paper which read as follows:

TENDERFOOT EXAMINATION,

WRITTEN.

- a Give the Scout promise.
- b What does the Scout motto mean?

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

- 2 Give the Scout laws in order.
- 3 a What is the purpose of the Scout movement?
b What does a Scout's honor mean?
c Give the meaning of one law.
d How and when should the Scout salute be given?
e Explain the Scout badge.
- 4 a Who made the American flag?
b Why was a flag needed?
c In what city was it made? What year?
d Name the committee appointed to design it.
- 5 a Quote General Washington's words about the flag.
b When was the flag officially adopted?
c Describe the first official flag of the stars and stripes.
- 6 a What do the stars represent? The stripes?
b For what do the colors, red, white and blue stand?
c How many stars has the flag now? What day is Flag day?
d When is a new star added and why?
- 7 Give fully the respect due the flag.
- 8 a What should Scouts do when the National Anthem is played?
b What should Civilians do at Retreat? Scouts?
- 9 a What is the United States Government?
b Who is at its head?
c Name the Commissioners of the District of Columbia.
- 10 a Write America.
b Write The Star Spangled Banner (omitting 3rd stanza).

Then followed the demonstration of knots and knot tying. Over and over they drilled her, and Elise was an apt pupil. Her delicate little fingers seemed to know of themselves what to do.

"I am glad she is to *write* that examination," sighed Helen the day before Elise was to go to Cap-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

tain Hooker and take her examination formally. She was to be examined on Friday afternoon, and at the meeting Saturday night she was to become a Tenderfoot Scout member of their patrol.

"What difference does it make whether she writes the exam. or recites her answers?" returned Rosanna. "She speaks brokenly, of course, but that does not matter."

"All it matters is that no one could hear her speak of General Washington the way she does in her funny broken English, without wanting to scream. It is so funny."

Funny or not, Elise went through her examination most successfully and Saturday night accompanied Helen and Rosanna to the meeting at Miss Hooker's house. Their little Captain had fitted up a room specially for her girls, where they could keep their various documents and where the seats, the neat desk for the secretary, and the standard for the big silk flag did not need to be disturbed in the intervals between meetings.

Elise was thrilled beyond words.

As they entered the room she saw that the two girls saluted their little Captain. Not knowing if she was expected to salute before becoming a Scout, Elise dropped a shy curtsy and followed Rosanna to a seat where they awaited the full number of Scouts and the shrill whistle from the Lieutenant which brought the meeting to order.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"The first whistle means *Attention*," whispered Helen.

Once again it sounded.

"That is for Assembly," whispered Rosanna on the other side, as all the girls rose.

Leaving Elise in her seat, the Scouts formed in double ranks at a distance of forty inches between ranks and an interval of sixty inches between patrols.

The eight girls who formed a patrol took their places in groups as signified by the crosses.

Patrol	Patrol	Patrol
XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
Captain	X	X Lieutenant

Elise found out afterward that number one in the front rank of each patrol is the Patrol leader, and number four the Corporal.

At the command "Company, attention!" from the little Captain, now standing so straight and so stern that Elise scarcely recognized her, the Company as a whole stiffened to attention.

The Lieutenant, a tall, pretty girl of nineteen, then commanded, "Corporals from Patrols!" and the three Corporals stepped forward two paces, made two right turns, and stood facing the center of the patrol. The Corporals then snapped out together, "Attention! Right Dress!" after which

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

they faced left, took two paces, made right turn, right face, and looked critically down the line to see that it was perfectly straight. After two short left steps to straighten the rear line, they faced right, took four paces forward, and with two right turns got back in position facing patrol and called the command "Front! Count off!"

The Corporals then one after the other called the roll of her Patrol, and finishing that, turned and reported to the Lieutenant that the Patrol was formed, after which they returned to their places in the ranks, and the Lieutenant, saluting the Captain, reported, "Captain, the Company is formed."

Inspection then followed. Each girl, saluting, stepped forward and her hair, teeth, hands, nails, shoes and general appearance was scrutinized.

Elise watched all this with great interest, interest which deepened as the Captain commanded "Color guard, march!" and three girls stepped from the ranks and stood side by side for a moment, then at a word of command marched to the flag. There they saluted and marched back; when the Captain and the Lieutenant faced about, and the Captain in her silvery voice said:

"The Flag of your Country; pledge allegiance!"

With one voice the girls united in the beautiful pledge to the flag, "I pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Elise looked at the silken folds of the glorious red, white and blue with tears in her eyes. How glad she was to make that pledge! Had not that flag, the flag that was now her own, floated over the shell-racked fields of France? Oh, she *loved* it!

The color guard returned, and the fresh young voices rose in the first verse of America.

“Scouts, your promise!” said the Captain.

“To do my duty to God and to my country.
To help other people at all times.
To obey the laws of the Scouts.”

the voices rang out.

“The laws!” said the Captain.

Again the chorus of girls repeated:

A Girl Scout's honor is to be trusted.

A Girl Scout is loyal.

A Girl Scout's duty is to be useful, and help others.

A Girl Scout is a friend to all, and a sister to every other Girl Scout.

A Girl Scout is courteous.

A Girl Scout keeps herself pure.

A Girl Scout is a friend to animals.

A Girl Scout obeys orders.

A Girl Scout is cheerful.

A Girl Scout is thrifty.

“Dismissed!” said the little Captain and, breaking ranks, the girls went to their seats where they sat talking in low tones until the sharp sound of

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

the Lieutenant's whistle called them to attention again.

"Now I do come," said Elise to herself, and her heart commenced to hammer in quite an alarming fashion. But it was not quite time for her to rise. Looking at Rosanna, she saw her give a slight shake of the head, and Elise leaned back in her seat while all the business of the meeting was settled and plans made for some aid for a poor family living near.

One thing Elise noticed particularly. The girls present were widely different in looks, and Elise with her delicate perceptions saw plainly that they belonged in widely differing classes, so called. A few of the girls, Rosanna among them, had the carefully cared for and delicately nurtured look of the very rich. More were like Helen, clean, carefully groomed and almost precise in her dress and accessories. Others were very evidently poor, with rough little hands that already told the story of hard work and few toilet creams. But whoever they were, they saw no difference in each other. They were Girl Scouts in the fullest and best sense of the word: sisters pledged to each other, and living up to that pledge in all earnestness and honor.

Elise, waiting for her summons to go forward, and understanding nothing of the business that was going on, threw her thoughts backward. She saw herself the idolized child of the gay, rich young couple in the great château, where long painted

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

lines of powdered and frilled and armor-clad ancestors looked down at her from the long galleries, and where dozens of willing servants danced to do her bidding. Then the picture changed, and with the roll of drums and the thunder of cannon she saw the hated foe march across her land, destroying as they came. Father, mother, grandmother, home, riches; all went down as under a devouring tide. Then the promises of her Monsieur Bob, and after long, long weary days spent with the ladies of the Red Cross came the journey into the Unknown, that trip across an ocean that was to forever separate her from a past that was too terrible for a little girl to have known.

To have found refuge in Mrs. Hargrave's tender arms, to have won such love and such friends — to be able to be a Girl Scout —

Elise turned her eyes, brimming with sudden tears, to the flag.

"Never, *never* will I zem disappoint!" she whispered tenderly, using as best she could the unfamiliar words of her adopted tongue.

CHAPTER IX

AT last Elise saw the Captain glance in her direction as the whistle blew once more for attention and the Captain commanded, "Fall in!" A look of serious interest appeared on the faces of the girls as they formed in a horseshoe, the Captain and the Lieutenant standing in the gap and the American flag spread out before them.

Elise, with Helen beside her, walked to a place just inside the circle and stood facing the Captain. In the Lieutenant's hands were the staff and hat, the shoulder knot, badge and neckerchief of the Tenderfoot Elise.

She could not refrain from a glance at them. How she had longed to wear all those things; the insignia of everything she had learned to admire and look up to in the girls of America!

"Salute!" said the Captain.

All saluted Elise, who stood waiting for some order, she did not know what.

"Forward!" said the Captain to Helen, and the two girls stepped to the center.

Regarding Elise with a long, careful glance, and speaking carefully, so the little French girl should miss nothing of the full meaning of her words, the Captain asked:

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

“Do you know what your *honor* means?”

“Yess,” said Elise, finding her voice after what seemed to her an endless time. “Yess, it does mean that always I shall be trusted to be faithful and true and honorable.”

“Can I trust you,” asked the Captain, “on your honor, to be loyal to God and your country, to help other people at all times, and to obey the Scout Law?”

Elise, coached by Helen and Rosanna, made the half salute in unison with the whole company, as she answered, “I do promise on my honor to be loyal to God and my country, to help other people at all times and to obey the Scout Law.”

“I trust you on your honor to keep this promise,” answered the Captain.

The circle of girls listened with respectful and solemn interest. Well they realized that the vow being given was not an empty or idle one. They knew that it entailed hard work, self-denial, and many hardships. Yet they gloried in it, and silently renewed their own vows as they heard the Tenderfoot make her promises.

“Invest!” came the Captain’s next order.

Stepping forward, the Lieutenant gave Elise her staff, and put the hat, handkerchief and knot on her, and smiled as Elise said, “I thank you!” in her pretty way.

Then, at a whispered word, she marched up the line to the Captain who pinned on her trefoil badge

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

and explained that it was an emblem of her Scout "life." If for any misbehavior, the trefoil or "life" must be taken away from her, she would become a dead Scout for the time the Captain ordered and for that time in disgrace.

The new Scout was then initiated into all the secret passwords, a proceeding which filled Elise with despair; she felt that she would never be able to remember the queer words and phrases.

Then with the ceremony of marching back to their proper patrols the ceremony was over, and in a moment the formal meeting was dismissed.

The girls crowded around, all anxious to meet the new Tenderfoot and welcome her. They talked to her so hard that Elise felt her head whirl. She was glad to hear the voice of the little Captain suggesting a song. She handed a leaflet to Elise, but the girls knew the songs, and gathering in a circle they wanted to know which one to sing.

"Sing *The Long, Long Line*," suggested the Captain, and the girls sang:

THE LONG, LONG LINE

(Tune: The Long, Long Trail)

Recruiting song.

Do you feel a little lonely?
Are your friends too few?
Would you like to join some jolly girls
In the things you think and do?
Don't you know your Country's waiting?

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Have you heard her call?
See, the Scouts are crowding, crowding in,
Where there's room for one and all!

CHORUS

There's a long, long line a-growing,
From north to south, east to west,
There's a place awaiting in it, too, that you'll fill best.
We are sure you'd like to join us
If you knew what we can do
And we'd like, O how we'd like to make a good Girl Scout of
you.

It certainly sounded sweet as the fresh young voices blended, and Elise thrilled as she listened. She was having such a good time! All the girls seemed so friendly and so sweet, with the exception of one girl who hung back and on whose face there rested the shadow of discontent and dissatisfaction. Elise found herself wondering about her; she seemed so out of place in that happy, merry throng. But none of the other girls appeared to notice that one of their number sat apart and occupied herself rather ostentatiously over a book.

They were all so busy making the evening pass pleasantly for the charming new Tenderfoot who responded so prettily to their advances that no one spoke or looked at the silent Scout, but presently Elise noticed that the little Captain sat down beside her and compelled her attention. Even then the girl looked as though she preferred to be let alone.

For a long while, the girls sat and told Elise

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

about their work and play and the camping in summer and the delightful hikes all the year. Finally it came time to go home and some one called for another song.

"Which shall it be, Elise?" asked Helen. "You choose one of the songs."

"I see one follows the air of the *Old Colored Joe*," said Elise. "I do know that loving song. Please to sing that; and if I may, I will try to sing it also."

"Of course we will sing that, you dear," laughed the tall young Lieutenant, and together they sang:

WE'RE COMING

(Tune: Old Black Joe)

Camping Song.

I

Come where the lake lies gleaming in the sun;
Come where the days are filled with work and fun.
Come where the moon hangs out her evening lamp;
The Scouts are trooping, trooping, trooping back to camp.

CHORUS

We're coming! We're coming! To the lakes, the hills, the
sea!
Old Mother Nature calls her children — you and me.

II

Come where we learn the wisdom of the wood;
Come where we prove that simple things are good,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Come where we pledge allegiance to our land;
America, you've called your daughters — here we stand.

CHORUS

We're coming! We're coming! 'Til we spread from sea to
sea,
Our country needs us — wants us — calls us — you and me!

“That is so *most* lovely,” said Elise as the song was finished, never for a moment realizing that her own pure and bell-like voice had added richness and beauty to the song.

The other girls looked at each other and smiled. Here was indeed a find. Never had there come a Scout to the council with such a wonderful voice. They felt that the pretty young Tenderfoot was a great acquisition to their number. So they all crowded around and said good night,— all but the silent Scout who had not joined in the jollity. Elise and Rosanna and Helen filled the two automobiles that were waiting for them with the girls. Never, never had those big cars been so crowded. Certainly they had never held happier passengers. But there was no noise or boisterousness, no singing or whistling. The girls chatted in tones that were agreeably low and as each one reached her destination, she thanked Rosanna or Elise. When the last passenger in the Hargrave car had been set down, Elise leaned back in a corner and thought deeply. She was happy beyond words.

To do good to someone every day; that was part

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

of her pledge. Such an easy part! But it was hard *not* to be good when everyone was so good to her. Then suddenly she thought of the sulky face of the girl at the meeting.

All the time she was telling Mrs. Hargrave about the installation and the songs, and trying them over for her, she saw the dark, discontented face before her. She could not feel perfectly happy because somehow the face seemed to send her a message. "Help me; help me!" Elise heard in her soul. But what could she, a stranger, a girl who could scarcely speak the new language, what *could* she do for that girl? And besides, why did she *need* help? Elise, whose bright eyes saw everything, had noted the beautiful silk stockings, the texture of the black hair ribbon, and at the last, the expensive fur that edged her coat. Also a car had come for her, in which she went off alone. It was not poverty, at all events, decided Elise. She could walk; she was not lame like the poor little blond in the corner. As Elise thought it over, she puzzled more and more. She decided to ask Rosanna or Helen next day; then a better decision came to her. She would find out for herself. No one should tell her. Then if she made any mistake, why, the mistake would be hers.

But the next day but one the plot thickened. She went over with Rosanna to see Miss Hooker about some Scout work, and as they stood on the steps waiting for the door to open, it did open with

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

a jerk, and the girl Elise had been worrying about dashed down the steps and into her limousine. Her face was disfigured with tears.

"Dear me!" said Rosanna. "What do you suppose has happened to Lucy Breen? She has been crying."

"Assuredly. The *petite pauvre* one!" answered Elise sadly.

Rosanna with her usual directness asked Miss Hooker the moment they entered what was the matter with Lucy.

Miss Hooker hesitated. "You really ought not ask a question like that, Rosanna," she said finally, "but perhaps I ought to tell you. You will all have to know."

"Please *don't* tell me, Miss Hooker," Rosanna begged with a deep flush. "I thought perhaps someone had died or something like that."

"No, but for a week Lucy must be a dead Scout herself."

"How *awful!*" cried both girls, and then were silent.

"I prefer not to tell you why just now, but of course this will not make you shun her. You must show all the kindness and consideration that you can for her, and be with her all you can." More than that Miss Hooker did not seem to want to say, and the girls, saddened and quiet, finished their errand and left.

A day or two later, going with Mrs. Hargrave

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

to the Red Cross rooms down town, Elise thought she saw Lucy Breen shrink out of sight behind some portières at the back of the store that the Red Cross used as a sales room.

Elise acted on a generous impulse. She went back through the store looking at one thing and another until she in turn came to the portières. Behind them was a space used for a sort of store-room for articles brought into the shop, and as Elise looked curiously through the curtains as though wondering what lay beyond, she saw Lucy standing in a corner, crowded against the wall. Elise nodded gaily.

"Are you what they call making the sort of things in here, Lucy?" she cried. "Is it not fun to see what the good kind people give away?"

She stepped into the store-room as she spoke, smiling and nodding. "Yes, it is droll, some of the things," she chattered on, as though Lucy was doing her share in the conversation. Finally, however, like a little clock, Elise ran down. She could not think of a single thing to say further, and she trailed off, looking shyly into Lucy's dark face.

Lucy was smiling a set and bitter smile.

"Don't you think you had better get out of this and leave me?" she asked. "Perhaps you don't know that I have lost my badge. I shall be a dead Scout for a week, and I don't care in the least whether I ever wear it again or not."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Elise came close and laid a hand on Lucy's shoulder, but the girl shook it off.

"*Don't!*" she said pettishly.

"I knew that you had resigned your badge for the so small time of a week," said Elise gently, "but one week soon passes."

"Do you know *why* I lost it?" asked Lucy harshly.

"No," said Elise, "and I do not so much care. That is for you to know, and our dear Captain. I am just so so 'sorry that you are unhappy. But you will be happy again. Always unhappiness goes away. We do not forget, but it ceases to wound. And if the fault makes you so unhappy, why, certainly you will never, never so do again; will you, dear Lucy?"

To her surprise and dismay, Lucy turned and, hiding her face in her arms, leaned against the cracked old wall and sobbed.

"Oh, I *am* unhappy!" she cried. "I am unhappy, and I don't know what to do! Sometimes I think I will run away!"

"Oh, don't do that; don't do that!" cried Elise. "Think of your dear mama and your father. Oh, you could never have a fault that would make you need to do anything that would make them so unhappy!"

Lucy laughed her bitter little laugh.

"I think I will tell you what has happened," she said, "and then you can see just how I feel."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Can you not tell to someone more wise than I?" asked Elise, her dismay growing. "I will be so glad to listen, but for advice, I am so ignorant, so what you call it? I speak your English so poorly, that maybe I say to you the wrong thing."

"You needn't say anything," said Lucy. "You were so good to come and speak to me, and I want to talk to someone. I had advice from Miss Hooker but I shall not take it."

"Was it not good advice?" asked Elise, who thought every word that Miss Hooker uttered was a pearl of wisdom.

"I suppose so," said Lucy with a sneer, "but she does not understand. Oh, Elise, I shall *die*, I am so unhappy."

"No," said Elise softly, "you will not die so. If it could be, I would be dead long since but I am not, and I am happy — so very, very happy just as my most dear ones who are dead would wish me to be. So it will be with you."

"I want to talk to you," said Lucy.

"Let us sit here then," said Elise, "where no one comes. There is a what you call 'meeting' which my maman is here to attend. It goes on in the upstairs, and she told me it would meet for an hour or two. Tell me all your woe."

She pulled Lucy down on a pile of velvet curtains and patting her hot little hand, said softly, "I wait."

CHAPTER X

"WHEN I was only two years old, my real mamma died," Lucy commenced, "and papa's sister, who was a great deal older than papa, came to take care of us. I had a brother five years older than I. Aunt Mabel was so kind to us, and let us do just as we pleased about everything. I don't see why things could not have gone on like that always, because as soon as I grew up I intended to take charge of the house and run it for papa. I am thirteen now so it wouldn't have been long before I could have done it. But when I was ten years old, my brother died, and after that, papa stayed away from the house all he could, although Auntie Mabel was always talking to him about his duty to me.

"Well, one day, when I was eleven years old, papa came home, and the very minute I saw his face I knew something had happened.

"'Goodness, papa,' I said, 'you look as though you had had good news!' 'I have, my dear,' he said, and then somehow as I looked at him I had such a funny feeling. All at once I didn't want to *know* what made him look so glad. So I just ~~sat~~ there and said nothing.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

“ ‘Don’t you want to know what it is?’ he said, and I said, ‘I don’t know whether I do or not.’ ”

“ Papa came over and put his head down on my shoulder the way he used to when he called me his little comforter, and said, ‘Oh, yes, Lucy, you want to know! Please say you want to know what your daddy has to tell you.’ ”

“ So I said, ‘All right,’ and Elise, he was going to get married! Oh, I just hated it! He told me lots about the lady. She was from Boston, and that was why I had never seen her, and had never heard about it. She had never been in Louisville. He said she was beautiful, and she did look nice in the picture he had in his pocket case, and he said she was just as lovely as she could be. I just sat there and let him talk, and finally he said, ‘Well, chicken, what do you think about it?’ I don’t know what made me say what I did. Somehow it popped out before I thought. I said, ‘Are you sure she isn’t marrying you for your money?’ ”

“ And papa sort of stiffened up and looked hard at me, and finally he said in a queer voice, ‘Good Lord, how old are you?’ I said, ‘I am eleven,’ and he said, ‘Well, you sound like Mrs. Worldly Wiseman, aged fifty. I suppose you will feel better if I say that the lady has more money than I have, and that I will be lucky if people do not claim that I have been the fortune hunter.’ ”

“ ‘Well, what is she going to marry you for?’ I asked. ‘She says she loves me,’ papa said. I

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

said, 'We don't want her here! We are getting along all right.' Oh, I didn't mean to be so ugly, but somehow I *hated* to have papa marry anyone, and I didn't know this lady. So papa went off awfully cross at me and the next person was Auntie Mabel. Papa had told me first; he thought he ought to, and then he went up and told Aunt Mabel. She came down pretty soon. I was right there in the big chair, trying to imagine what it would be like to have a stranger in the house.

"Auntie said, 'Well, Lucy, what do you think of the news?' I said, 'It is nothing to us; we can keep in our rooms most of the time.'

"'I can't,' said Aunt Mabel, 'because I shall leave when she comes. Not that I have the slightest objection, but all the same off I go. I knew it would happen sooner or later, but Henry waited so long that I hoped he was going to let well enough alone. But men are all alike!' And she *did* go, Elise, the very day before papa brought the lady home. And I *couldn't* go because there was no place for me to go and Auntie wouldn't take me with her because she said it would make papa angry. So I had to stay whether I wanted to or not. It was perfectly awful!"

"Poor, poor Lucee!" murmured Elise, patting the hand she held.

"I was expecting to see a lady 'most as old as Auntie, and papa came up the steps with somebody *young*. Why, she was *awfully* young, and had as

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

much powder on her nose as anybody. I was looking through the curtains, and when I saw them coming, I ran upstairs and hid. Papa hunted and called, but I wouldn't answer, and I heard him getting angry, and then she said, 'Don't mind, Henry; it is the most natural thing in the world. Let me find her, I know just where to look,' and papa said in the silliest way, 'Go ahead, darling, the house is yours, and the child too if you will have such a bad one.'

"Well, Elise, she came up those stairs and straight to the table I was under, as though someone had told her! The cover went down to the floor, and she lifted it up, and said 'Coop!' but I came out crosser than ever, and we had a horrid time.

"So that is the way it went. Worse and worse all the time. Papa was not cross with me because she wouldn't let him be, and I felt pretty mean to think a stranger had to tell my own father how to treat me. At first she tried to act so sweet to me, and used to want to play with me. I told her I thought it was silly, but she said she had lots of brothers and sisters, and they always romped around together and had a fine time, and she said if I would only be friends we could have such larks. I told her I hoped I was polite and all she said was to wonder where I got my disposition.

"At first they used to make me stay down with them at night after dinner, but by and by I was

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

allowed to go upstairs. I said I wanted to study. I always kept a study book open on the table, and would go to reading it as soon as they came up. Papa used to come in once in awhile, and she was always asking me if she could help me with my lessons. She said she used to help her brothers.

"After a year, one of the brothers came to visit. He was a real nice boy, and I would have liked him only he was so silly about her; used to want to be with her all the time, and put his arm around her and all that! We had a real good time though, and I thought that I had been real nice to her before him until the day he went home. I was in the library, and he came in. I was just going to ask him to put his autograph in my album when he said: 'Gee, you are a disagreeable little mutt! My sister would half kill me for saying it, but honest, I don't see how she stands you!'

"Of course I just walked out of the room. I knew then that she had been telling things about me. And I knew that must be the reason why papa was so different to me."

"But *was* he?" asked Elise wonderingly.

"Yes, he was, and Miss Hooker says it is all my fault. I had been coldly polite to her for a good while before that. I read about a girl who was abused by a stepmother and the girl was too noble to abuse her in return. She was just 'coldly polite,' the book said, and so was I. But after that

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

horrid boy went home I let myself be as mean as I could."

Elise nodded. "I saw it in your face," she said.

"And the more I thought of it, the more I was able to *act* ugly. It is so funny, Elise, the way she makes everybody like her. Papa just gets worse all the time, and the servants *adore* her, and she is so popular with all the people who come to the house. She makes them all like her — all but me."

"We will talk about that later," said Elise.

Lucy sighed. "Well, things have been getting worse and worse, but I think we have both tried to keep it from papa. We hate each other, but we don't want him to know how bad things are in the house. Papa is not happy, though. Oh, he has talked and talked to me and threatened to send me to school, and I always tell him I wish he would. But the other day the worst happened. Papa had gone to the office, and I was reading in the library, and she was walking around and around, fussing and singing under her breath and sort of acting happy. It made me so mad. Presently she saw me looking at her, and she said, 'Don't you wonder why I am singing?' and I said, 'No, I had not noticed.' She went right on: 'I have had some good news, wonderful news, and I wonder if you would like to hear it, Lucy?'

"I said, 'I am not at all interested,' and went right on looking at my book. She came over and leaned down on the table close to my face, and

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

stared and stared at me. She said, 'Look at me, you bad, difficult, cruel child, look at me and tell me why you are bound to hate me so!' I never saw anyone look so angry. Then her face changed and got pleasant again, and she said, 'What have I *done*? Your own mother, if she can see this house and its unhappy inmates, knows that I have tried to make friends with you.'

"I remembered how furious the girl in the book was when her stepmother spoke of her mother, and I raised my hand and slapped her."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Elise, covering her eyes. "The poor, poor lady!"

Lucy went doggedly on.

"Of course I had no business to do that. She went to her room, and stayed there all day, and when papa came home he went right up. I was on my way to my room, and I heard him say, 'I don't believe it is a headache at all. I think Lucy must have been annoying you,' and she said, 'No,' and papa said, 'I shall send that child away to school.' And she said, 'No, give us one more chance. I am going to see Miss Hooker, her Scout Captain, and see if her influence is strong enough to make Lucy see things in the right way.' As soon as I heard that I made up my mind to see the Captain first, so I went over and that was the day I saw you on the steps. We had had a long, long talk and she said I was all wrong and took away my trefoil. So here I am a dead Scout, and I am

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

so unhappy that I don't know what to do and I am going to run away. I want you to have my pony. I am going to send it over to your house tomorrow."

"No, no, no!" cried Elise. "Everything is wrong; so wrong! Oh, let me think! That poor, poor lady! I am so, so sorry for her."

"Sorry for *her*!" cried Lucy. "There is no need to be sorry for *her*! I am the one to be sorry for. *She* has everything."

"Why has she?" asked Elise. "She has nothing that you have not. She has your most dear papa; so have you. You both have a most lovely home, everything beautiful, friends, comfort. You are safe in a great land, where no enemy may come and keel all you love. You have both the same things. You share them." She sat thinking. "Yes, she is the one to be sorry for, because she is so disappoint. When she go to marry your *père*, she have something promised that she never gets and so she is full of mournsomeness."

"She has everything papa can get for her," said Lucy bitterly. "I wish you could see the pearls he gave her the other day."

"Pearls!" said Elise scornfully. "What are pearls? He promised her something only *you* could give her, and now she has it not, and she is sad, and you are sad; everybody sad. What do you call her?"

"I don't call her anything," said Lucy stub-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

bornly. "I wait until she looks at me and then I say what I want to say."

"Foolish, foolish one," said Elise. "That is what no one likes. Besides, it is what you call rude not to speak the name. Most rude!" She saw a frown deepen on Lucy's brow and gently pressed her hand.

"You wanted to tell me, did you not?" she said softly. "Now I want to tell you what I have not so many times told because I cannot speak of it unless my heart feels like it does bleed. I have had *such* sorrows, and have seen such dreadfulness; I have been so cold, and hongry, and frightened. I have lived in the wet underground for so long time that all this makes a differentness in me from you. Something in me feels most old and weary. I keep it shut up because my darling Maman Hargrave wants me a happy child, and I want it for myself, but I do feel the oldness when I see others unhappy when they could so easily be full of joy. No, let me talk!" she added, as Lucy tried to speak.

"I must say this, I feel it on me, to save that poor lady her happiness. I shall be sorry for you some other day, but now I am most sad for her. When she marry your papa, she think all the time that she is going to have a most sweet daughter because that is how your dear papa would tell her of you, and then what happens? You know.

"Oh, Lucee, dear, *dear* Lucee, there is one thing you must give to her, right now today quick "

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"What is that?" said Lucy, startled by Elise's vehemence.

"*LOVE!*" cried Elise, her sweet voice thrilling. "Love! So easy, so sweet! Please, my Lucee, do not turn away. I know I am right on account of the oldness in my heart. That tells me. Think how most glad your own mother is to have the pretty one taking such good care of your papa and of you. Does she select your clothes?"

"Yes," said Lucy.

"They are always the prettiest," said Elise. "No other girl is so chic — what you call stunning. And so modest, so quiet. And you yourself say everyone but you loves her. You too must love her, and the best of all. You *must!* You are a Scout, and so you do always the right thing. Where is she now?"

"Home, I suppose. I came down to bring some of my last winter's dresses. Oh, Elise, even if I could, it is too late. I *can't* go back to the beginning again and start over."

"Of course not," said Elise wisely. "It is a most bad waste of time when we try going back to beginnings. It is better to start right from here. *Anywhere* is the best place to start. When you go home you start then! You start here by making some new sweet thoughts in your heart. Dear Lucee, please try! Please, for the sake of your Elise who also has to try to be always happy and not remember those blackness behind her. Won't

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

you, please? I know I am right. Will you try to give her love?"

Lucy, the tears pouring down her cheeks, leaned her head against the shoulder near her.

"I don't see how I *can*," she said huskily. "But I will try. I am so sick of everything the way it is."

"Of course you are!" said Elise. "One is always seek of wrong. It makes a blackness over everything."

"What will I do? How will I begin?"

"I cannot tell you," said Elise. "You will know what to do. Something will tell you. Something always tells. I think it is *le bon Dieu*. Just trust and you will know what to do and to say. Come, let us go. I hear the meeting talking itself down the stairs. Is your car waiting?"

"Yes," said Lucy dully as she allowed Elise to lead her through the store. "Oh, Elise, I *don't* love her, and I don't know what to do!"

"It is because of the hatefulness you put in your heart long ago that you do not love her," said the wise, sad little girl who had suffered beyond her years. She stood at the door of the limousine and smiled at the little girl who sank back so wearily.

"Don't forget it is *now* we make those beginnings. And you owe her what your dear papa promised her, your love." She stepped back with a wave of her hand as the machine started away.

Lucy's heart throbbed violently as she ap-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

approached her home. Her one hope was that Mrs. Breen was out, so the moment might be delayed. But as she passed the door of the library she saw Mrs. Breen lying in a low lounging chair. How pale she looked! Lucy was quite startled to see the look of suffering and weakness on the beautiful young face. She had been too blind to notice what had been worrying her father of late. Was it *her* fault? Had *her* actions brought her self-made enemy so low? Lucy was shocked.

She went up and put away her wraps. Still she did not know what to do or what to say. Twice she passed the library door. No thought came to her. She went in, not speaking, and selected a book at random from the nearest shelf. Mrs. Breen did not speak but her great blue eyes seemed to follow Lucy appealingly. Then Lucy found her courage. What she said was rough and crude but it came from the heart—an honest statement and appeal for tolerance and understanding. She came, clutching her book, and stood facing Mrs. Breen.

Her voice sounded so husky and shaken that she did not know it for hers.

“Mamma,” she said, stumbling over the unfamiliar word. “Mamma, you know I do not like you, but I am going to try to love you!”

And then, clasping her book with both hands, she fled.

CHAPTER XI

YEARS had passed before Mrs. Breen and Lucy ever found the courage to speak of that day when Lucy had hurried from the room, leaving Mrs. Breen too surprised to follow her, or even speak. She sat thinking, so glad and so happy and so proud of the courage shown by Lucy. She heard the front door close softly and was not surprised, a little later, to have one of the maids come and tell her that Miss Lucy had telephoned that she was at Mrs. Hargrave's, and would stay for supper with Elise.

Mrs. Breen sat thinking for an hour, then the right thought came to her. She hastened to the telephone and had a long talk with her husband, and after a good deal of argument, she went to her room, packed a small trunk, ordered the car, had a talk with the housekeeper, and went out. She drove to her husband's office, and he ushered her into his private room.

"Now what is all this?" he demanded.

"I told you over the telephone what happened in the library," Mrs. Breen said. "My dear, I am so happy and so proud of Lucy! But there will be the most distressing awkwardness for a little, unless something out of the ordinary happens

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

to help her out. Now I have never been away without you since we were married. So I have decided to give the child a chance to regain her poise and strengthen her new resolutions. Something has changed her, and I am contented to accept it without question until the times comes when she will tell me of her own accord. I will go home for a week, and you must spend all the time you can with Lucy. And when you feel like it, speak well of me."

"That will be a hard job," said her husband, smiling.

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Breen. "Another thing, to keep her interest in me, if you should decide to repaper my room and want to *surprise* me, I would be perfectly satisfied with Lucy's taste."

So when Lucy came in that night, dreading the next step toward the right, she found only her father reading under the library light.

"Hello, Donna Lucia," he said, looking up. "Did you know that we are orphans?"

"No," said Lucy. "What has happened?"

"Mamma decided very suddenly that she had to go home to Boston to attend to some matters, and she did not have time to telephone you or call around at Mrs. Hargrave's. But she managed to stop in at the office, and she has left me in your charge."

Lucy heaved a sigh of relief. Thank goodness, she would have a little time to herself anyway.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

A couple of days later Mr. Breen approached the subject of the new wall-paper. He merely *approached* it, because at the first mention Lucy fairly flung herself on it and appropriated it. The very thing, she decided. She thought that room was about as shabby as it could be. Could she select the paper? Of course she could! She knew exactly what mamma would like.

At her use of the word mamma, Mr. Breen's heart leaped. He had been a patient, but very unhappy man, and the thought that his little household might become united was the greatest happiness he could imagine. So he grumbled out that he was glad of that, because he never could tell the *least* thing about the silly strips of paper they showed in the stores, and Lucy could go ahead and get whatever she wanted.

But the following morning, when a van backed up to the door and a couple of men commenced to take away all the prettiest wicker furniture in the house he demanded some explanation.

"Why, they have to be painted for mamma's new room," said the practical Miss Breen. "You said I could go ahead, and I have gone!"

"All our furniture has gone too, I should say," said Mr. Breen.

"Just the best of the wicker," answered Lucy. "I thought and thought all last night, and I have decided just what would be the *loveliest* thing in the world for her, with her violet blue eyes and

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

golden hair. So when you were shaving I telephoned for the men to come and take the chairs and tables and that chaise-longue and they are all going to be painted.

"And today you had better write her that you think it would be a good thing, as long as she is there, to stay another week. Don't let her suspect, but *don't* let her come home."

"Very well," said Mr. Breen with a twinkle in his eye, but outwardly very meek. "Just as you say. Send the bills to me."

"Oh, I was going to," said Lucy with the happiest laugh he had heard from her for months.

Mr. Breen did not come home for luncheon, and every day Lucy managed to have Elise or Rosanna or Helen take that meal with her.

Lucy worked like mad and nearly wore the workmen out, she hurried them so. Mrs. Breen decided to make a longer stay, but even then there was but little time, because Lucy had decided that all the woodwork must be re-enameled. When that was done and the paper on, she cast aside the old rug with scorn, and took the three girls downtown to buy others. As the days went on, Lucy found that her point of view was wholly changed. She was so intent on the beautiful surprise she was planning that it seemed to sweep her mind clean of all the dark and unworthy feelings that had filled it. She even wrote to Mrs. Breen at a suggestion from

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Elise, a pleasant friendly letter, ending, "With love, Lucy."

And to her surprise Mrs. Breen answered the letter at once, with a long one all about her visit, and enclosing funny little cartoons of each one of the family, including the boy who had spoken his mind to Lucy. Strange to say, Lucy was able to acknowledge the truth of the young man's remark.

"Some day," said Lucy to herself, "if this turns out all right, I will tell him that he was *perfectly right*."

Lucy was coming to think, with a sense of deep chagrin, that she herself had been the one in the wrong. And being an honest girl and wanting very humbly and deeply to live up to the pledge of the Girl Scouts, she was growing most anxious to make good her faults.

So she drove the painters and paperhangers and upholsterers almost wild, and had the happiness of seeing the beautiful room all settled and in order two days before Mrs. Breen was expected. It had a hard time staying settled however, because Lucy spent all her time after school trying things in new places to see if they looked any better. Her father vowed that he would go up and nail the things down, but he was just as proud and pleased as Lucy.

With all the planning and plotting, and various jaunts to the shops together, and to some movies

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

and once to the theatre, Lucy and her father had entered a new epoch in their lives. They too seemed to have forgotten the past.

As Elise said, they found that they could make a beginning anywhere. And once begun, they found that it was like a door that had opened into a beautiful place full of happiness and sunshine — a door that closed softly behind them and shut out all the despair and gloom on the other side.

When the day came for Mrs. Breen's return, Mr. Breen insisted on Lucy coming to meet her, and Lucy, in whom some of the old dread seemed struggling to awake, went silently. But when she was suddenly caught in a warm embrace, before even her father was greeted, and when a sweet voice said, "Oh, what a *long* two weeks it has been, Lucy! *Do* say you have missed me!" Lucy felt that all was indeed well with her world.

Mrs. Breen had brought another brother with her: a shy, awkward boy, evidently frightened to death of Lucy, a fact which of course set her completely at her ease. They drove home, and Lucy and her father dogged Mrs. Breen's footsteps up the stairs when she said she would go and take off her things. Not for worlds would they have missed seeing her first look at the newly decorated room. And it was worth all the trouble to witness her delight and appreciation.

So Happiness and Love and Understanding came into the Breen home. Lucy wore her trefoil with

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

a new gratitude and a new understanding. Elise felt a happiness that she had thought she could never feel, for she had helped a sister Scout through a dark and dreadful place in her life. Mrs. Breen was so happy that she sang and sang all the day long, and when one day a baby boy set up a lusty roar in the beautiful room that Lucy had made, it was Lucy who named him, and Lucy who assumed such airs of superiority in speaking of "my baby brother" that the girls grew to avoid the subject of children in general as it was sure to bring from Lucy some anecdote to prove the vast superiority and beauty of the Breen baby.

Rosanna was happy too. Uncle Robert had been away longer than Rosanna liked. She was surprised to find how much she missed Uncle Robert. And much as she loved him, and wanted him to be happy, she decided that it was really a good thing that he did *not* care for girls. The various uncles who did like girls she noticed had a way of marrying one of them and leaving home for good. That was a poor plan, thought Rosanna, as she felt the silence in the big old house. No number of girls could make the whistly noises Uncle Robert could when he ran upstairs three steps at a time or dashed down again. No one but Uncle Robert could tootle so entrancingly on the flute, or pick out such funny records for the Victrola. No one in the world would think to bring one a box of candy and leave it hidden in his hat, or just outside the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

door for one to find after dinner. No other Uncle would remember a little girl's birthday once a month with a new dollar bill.

Rosanna, driven by a real loneliness to confide in someone, spent much time with Miss Hooker and while Rosanna honestly thought she was attending strictly to Scout business, the conversation was sure to slip around to Uncle Robert. Miss Hooker never appeared to join Rosanna in her talk, but it was surprising what a good listener she proved to be. The only time she said anything was when Rosanna would enlarge on the way Uncle Robert felt about girls. Then Miss Hooker would always assert that she thought he was perfectly right, because she herself thought very little of men. Silly creatures she said they were, at which loyal Rosanna would always declare, "But Uncle Robert isn't."

Miss Hooker would answer, "*Possibly* not," in a manner that insinuated that perhaps he wasn't, and perhaps he *was*, but Rosanna let it go.

However, Rosanna was happy because Uncle Robert had written her that he was coming home in a day or two, and that she might get ready to look in the left hand pocket of his overcoat, and whatever was there she could have. When she told Miss Hooker she was grieved to hear her say that she was not sure that she would be around to see the surprise, because she was planning to go away herself, and wasn't it too bad?

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"I should say it was!" said Rosanna. "Why, then you won't see Uncle Robert either!"

"No," said Miss Hooker, "but it really doesn't make any difference. I don't suppose I am any more anxious to see him than he is to see me."

When Uncle Robert appeared and came up the front steps three at a time as usual, Rosanna was at the door to meet him. She jumped into his arms and hugged him until he begged for mercy.

As she let him go, she happened to think of the left hand pocket, and had to think which was the left. While she was deciding, she heard a funny noise, and there in the pocket was a fuzzy head. The most adorable little head! It was a tiny baby collie, looking like a small bear. Rosanna had him out in a second, and Uncle Robert left her with her new pet while he went to speak to his mother.

That night he came up to show Rosanna how to put her puppy to bed for the night, and when the little fellow at last snuggled down in his basket, and went to sleep, Uncle Robert settled down in his favorite chair and lighted a cigarette and wanted to hear all the news.

"What shall I start with?" asked Rosanna, listening to the soft breathing of the little collie.

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Uncle Robert. "Begin with Miss—er Gwenny."

"Why, you needn't call her *Miss*," said Rosanna. "You never used to! I thought first you were going to say begin with Miss Hooker."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Ridiculous!" laughed Uncle Robert, cocking his eye up at the ceiling. "Begin with Gwenny, of course."

"Well," said Rosanna, "we have only had two letters from her mother. One was soon after you went away, and said that Gwenny was very comfortable indeed, and had a fine room, and was making a great many friends. The doctor couldn't tell when he would operate, because he would have to take Gwenny any time she happened to be at her best. That was about all of that letter. The next one was just the other day. And Uncle Robert, they have operated! They telegraphed for Doctor Rick, and he is there now. But Mrs. Harter wrote that the operation was over and Doctor Branshaw thinks it will be perfectly successful."

"Well, that is perfectly splendid!" said Uncle Robert. "Did she tell you how Gwenny stood it?"

"Yes. She said for a couple of hours they were afraid her heart was going to stop, but that Doctor Branshaw stood right over her, and had everything ready to start it again if they could. He stayed with her all night. You ought to hear the way Mrs. Harter talks about him. She thinks he is a saint, as well as the greatest doctor in the whole world."

"He assays pretty well toward solid gold," said Uncle Robert.

"Mrs. Harter says they don't know when they will be able to get home, but already Gwenny sleeps

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

better and is beginning to want to eat. She never did, you know."

"That is certainly fine news," said Uncle Robert. "Anything else happened while I was away?"

"You know that Lucy Breen?" asked Rosanna. Uncle Robert shook his head.

"She has turned out to be a real nice girl, and Helen and Elise and I go over there a lot. And her mother (it's really her stepmother, only Lucy is mad if you call her that) is perfectly lovely. If you could only marry *her*, Uncle Robert!"

"Thank you, Rosanna, but Mr. Breen looks husky and he might object."

"Oh, that was a joke," said Rosanna. "Like the time you said you pretty near loved Miss Hooker. I wish you could have heard her laugh when I told her that."

"Oh, you told her, did you?" said Uncle Robert.

"It was so funny I had to."

"What did she say?" asked Uncle Robert, sitting up suddenly.

"She said she thought you were the most amusing person she had ever met and that no one could possibly take you seriously. I agreed with her."

"I'll bet you did!" said Uncle Robert.

"She has gone away," said Rosanna as an afterthought. "She went today. I told her I was sorry she wouldn't be able to see what you brought me, and wouldn't see you either, but she said it didn't make any difference as she wasn't any more

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

anxious to see you than she supposed you were to see her."

Uncle Robert laughed a short, queer laugh.

"Well, Rosanna, just you watch what happens now! I will just pay her up for that."

"What do you care?" asked Rosanna. "I don't see what difference it makes. She likes you all right; she thinks you are so funny."

"I will show her how funny I can be," said Uncle Robert. "Where has she gone?"

"To Atlantic City," said Rosanna.

"I may see her there," said Uncle Robert. "The doctor says the sea air would be great for me."

"What ails you?" said Rosanna anxiously. "You look perfectly well."

"A little trouble with my heart," said Uncle Robert soberly. "It acts like the very deuce, Rosanna. Part of the time it feels sort of — sort of, well, sort of *empty*, and then it has spells when I get to thinking hard and beats as fast as it can. It is awful, Rosanna."

"I should say it was!" said Rosanna. "Oh, Uncle Robert, *do* try to get it well! If anything should happen to you, I would think it was that benefit. You had to work so hard."

"I think myself that had something to do with it," said Robert, "but of course I only did my duty, and I don't blame a soul."

CHAPTER XII

THERE was a long silence during which Rosanna studied her uncle closely. She even forgot the puppy. What if anything should happen to Uncle Robert? As she looked at him it flashed over her that she cared for him with all her heart. She would not know what to do without him. She felt very sad, and when Uncle Robert looked up and surprised the worried expression on her face he laughed, and said :

“Cheer up, sweetness! I am all right, and I want you to promise me that you won’t tell mother what I have just told you. I don’t want to worry her.”

“I promise, Uncle Robert; and I always keep my promises,” said Rosanna.

“That is a good thing,” said Uncle Robert. “I wish I had known that before. I would have had you make me some.” But he wouldn’t explain that remark, and soon went out, not seeming to care for the rest of the news which, being all about the Scouts, Rosanna had left until the last as the most important.

The Girl Scouts were very busy now getting ready for Christmas. There was a cast-iron rule in that

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

particular troop that all Christmas presents should be finished and wrapped up three weeks before Christmas.

So with all their own work well out of the way, they were busy as bees making tarleton stockings and collecting toys and dolls for the particular orphanage they had assumed the care of. Louisville is full of orphanages, and every year the girls were in the habit of choosing one of them for their attention. They dressed a tree, and secured presents for each of the children. These presents were often dolls and toys that had been cast aside by more fortunate children, but the girls took them and mended and painted and dressed them until you would have been surprised at the result. At least they never offered anything that looked shabby. The stockings were filled with popcorn and candy, and a big golden orange gladdened each little heart.

Rosanna worked harder than anyone. School went right on as it always does whether or not Girl Scouts are busy at other things, and every spare moment was spent with the dear little puppy that her uncle had brought her. Mr. Horton still complained to Rosanna about his heart, but was unable to go east as he had planned. He often asked Rosanna if Miss Hooker had returned, although Rosanna had told him a good many times that she did not expect to come back before spring.

But news came from Gwenny. She was so much

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

better that she could come back. As Miss Hooker was away, and Uncle Robert always seemed to have time to do things, the Girl Scouts made him a committee to go and pay the doctor and the hospital bills, and see that Gwenny and her mother reached home safely.

Uncle Robert dashed off to Cincinnati that very night. The next day he returned without Gwenny, and with a queer look on his face asked Rosanna to ask their Lieutenant, who was in charge of the troop, to call a meeting that very afternoon or evening. Rosanna called Miss Jamieson up, and between them they were able to get word to all the girls. Rosanna was as excited as any of them, because Uncle Robert would not tell her what the matter was. When the girls all gathered in Rosanna's sitting-room, he came in, looking very mysterious and important.

"I have news for you girls — quite remarkable news, I think. To begin, I went down to Cincinnati and found Gwenny so improved that I actually did not know her. Of course she is still in a wheel chair, and will have to stay there most of the time for the next year but every day she goes through certain exercises, and soon will begin to take a few steps. Doctor Branshaw assured me that she will some day be as well as any of you. They have taught Mrs. Harter just how to rub her, and help her with her exercises.

"After I had seen Gwenny I went down and paid

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

the hospital bill. It came to a little over two hundred dollars. I have the items in my pocket. Then I went to Doctor Branshaw's office, and asked him for his bill. He said, 'Sit down. I want to have a talk with you.' Well, girls, he wanted to know all about you, and the work you are doing, and how many there are of you in the troop that is taking care of Gwenny. I told him about the benefit, and he said he had heard about that from Gwenny, and her mother, as well.

"I didn't want to bore him, so after we had talked you pretty well out, and over, I asked him again for his bill, and he said, 'Horton, there is no bill.' I said, 'Well, sir, whenever you will have it made out, I will give a check for it. The money the girls made is banked in my name for the sake of convenience.'

"'How much is there?' asked the doctor. I thought he didn't want to charge over the amount we have so I told him. He fiddled with a pencil for awhile, then he said:

"'Horton, I make the rich pay, and pay well, but I do not intend to ask those girls of yours a cent for this operation.'"

A great "O-o-o-o-h!" went up from the girls.

Uncle Robert went on.

"Then the doctor said, before I could thank him, 'I wonder if the girls would mind if I make a suggestion,' and I assured him that you would like it very much.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

“‘Well then,’ said the doctor, ‘here it is. Gwenny will require a great deal of care for many months to come, rubbing and so forth. Why don’t those good girls take the money and buy a little house somewhere on the edge of the city, or on a quiet street, where the Harters could live and where Mrs. Harter would not have to work so hard to earn the rent? From what she says, the boys earn nearly enough to feed the family. What do you think of that?’

“I told him that I thought it was a splendid idea, and would see what could be done about it. Then he made the finest suggestion of all. He said that another week in the hospital would be of great benefit to Gwenny, and why didn’t I come home and see you and if you all approve, we can buy a small house and settle it and Gwenny can be moved right there.”

A shriek of delight went up, and everyone commenced to talk at once.

“Order, order!” cried Mr. Horton. He could scarcely make himself heard.

At last after much talking, it was settled that Mr. Horton should look at a number of houses, and when he had seen them he was to select the three that seemed most promising and take all the girls to see them. But he stipulated that a couple of older ladies should look them over with him, and Mrs. Breen and Mrs. Hargrave were chosen by unanimous vote.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Now, girls, how are you going to thank the Doctor?" he asked.

No one knew and finally Rosanna suggested that it would be well to think it over. So they all trooped home, Uncle Robert promising to make a report at the end of three days.

It was a long three days, but it passed finally, and Uncle Robert appeared with an account of three little bungalows that seemed all that he had hoped for, and more. One of them he thought was the one for them to take, as it was right on a good part of Preston Street where the children could easily get to school. It was brand new, and had never been occupied. Indeed it was not finished but would be within two or three days. After the girls had seen the three houses, Mr. Horton said he would tell them which one Mrs. Hargrave and Mrs. Breen liked the best. Of course all the girls piled into the automobiles of the girls who had them, and made the rounds, and equally of course they all decided on the Preston Street house which was the very one that Mrs. Hargrave and Mrs. Breen had liked. It was all done except the plumbing in the kitchen, so Mr. Horton went right over to see Minnie who was still keeping house for the Harter children. Minnie heard all about the new plan, and Mr. Horton asked:

"Now, Minnie, do you feel like moving these people all over there, before Mrs. Harter and Gwenny come home, or is it too much to ask you?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Just you fetch me a moving van the day you want we should move," said Minnie, "and I will do the rest." She cast an eye around the dilapidated, shabby room. "My, my! What a piece of good luck for the *deservingest* woman! I tell you, Mr. Robert, the time I've been here has been a lesson to me. The way she has scrimped, and saved, and patched, and turned, and mended, and went without! My young man and me on his wages ought to put away fifty dollars every month of our lives. And so I told him we was going to do. Of course I will move 'em! And Mr. Robert, if it was so I could go around and see the house, perhaps I could tell better how to pack."

"That's right, Minnie. Suppose we go over now," said Mr. Horton.

Minnie was overjoyed when she saw the little house, and at once picked out a room for Gwenny. The other children could double up, but Gwenny should have a room to herself. Minnie seemed thoughtful all the way home, and finally said, "Mr. Horton, up in your garret, there is a pile of window curtains that don't fit anywhere, and they will never be used. I have handled 'em a million times while I worked for your mother. And there's a square table with a marble top that your mother can't abide the sight of, and a couple of brass beds put up there when they went out of date. If your mother would spare any of those things I could fix that house so tasty."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"I don't suppose she wants any of them," said Robert heartily. "I will speak to her about them when I go home, and after supper Rosanna and I will take a joy ride over here and tell you what her answer is."

The answer was that Mrs. Horton was only too glad to get rid of the things Minnie had mentioned, and suggested that before settling the house Minnie might go through the attic and see if there was anything else that she thought would be of service. Mrs. Horton, knowing that Minnie would know better than she could, just what the Harters would appreciate, refrained from making any suggestions; and Minnie found many treasures in the attic. There were portières, and a soft low couch, the very thing for Gwenny to rest on in the pleasant sitting-room, and the beds, and a table and two bureaus. And she found two carpet rugs.

She set Mary and Myron to work with a pot of cream colored paint, and in two days the shabby old dining-room table and shabbier chairs were all wearing bright new coats.

As soon as ever she could, she called on Mr. Robert for the moving van, and moved everything over to the new house. Settling was a joy, there were so many to help. All the Girl Scouts wanted to do something, and between them they outfitted Gwenny's dresser (a walnut one that was put through the paint test and came out pretty as could be). The two carpet rugs were laid down in the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

living-room and the dining-room, and looked scarcely worn at all after Minnie had finished scrubbing, and Tommy and Myron had whipped them. The dining-room rug was dark blue, and how that table and those chairs did show up on it. The springs were broken down in the couch Minnie had picked out, but she turned it over and her young man nailed a new piece of webbing underneath, and in five minutes it was as good as new. Rosanna helped her as much as she could. When they were busy putting up the curtains Minnie said, "Rosanna dear, I think your Uncle Robert looks thin."

"I think he does too," said Rosanna, but remembering her promise would say no more.

"In love," said Minnie, wisely nodding her head.

"Of course *not*," said Rosanna. "He doesn't like girls."

"No, he doesn't. Oh no!" said Minnie. "Of course he is in love! Do you mean to tell me, Rosanna, that you don't know that he is in love with little Miss Hooker? Don't tell me that!"

"I *do* tell you," said Rosanna. "He doesn't even like her, sweet as she is."

"My good land, hear the child!" said Minnie, sitting down on the top step of the ladder, and letting the stiffly starched curtain trail to the floor.

"Do you remember the day she came to see you when you were sick after your accident, and your grandmother had said you could be a Girl Scout?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Do you remember that your Uncle Robert was there when she came in? Well, believe me, Rosanna, your Uncle Robert fell in love with her that very day and hour and minute, and that's the truth."

"I wish it was," sighed Rosanna. "I *do* wish it was, but he truly does not like her. I don't know why."

"Well, that beats me!" said Minnie, picking up the slack of the curtain again, and sadly hanging it. "I certainly am disappointed, for she is the *sweetest* little bit I ever hope to see, and it would be a mercy to see that good, kind, nice actin' young man get the likes of her rather than some high nosed madam, who would look down on all his humble friends (as friends we *are*, Rosanna, as you may well believe)."

Rosanna did not answer. She was too low in her mind. She knew that Uncle Robert did not care for anyone, but what if someone *should* grab him anyhow? Rosanna felt that life was full of perils.

Two days later the little house was in perfect order, and Uncle Robert went again to Cincinnati after Gwenny. It was decided that no one should meet them on account of tiring Gwenny after her journey, so Uncle Robert carried Gwenny to the automobile and took her home to the little new house, her mother looking back with her sweet, anxious smile from the front seat of the automobile.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

When they reached the Preston Street house, and Mary and Myron and boisterous Tommy and little Luella all filed out quite quiet, but brimming with happiness, Mrs. Harter could only stare.

"This is Gwenny's house, Mrs. Harter, deeded to her. Come in!" said Mr. Horton, as Minnie rushed out and led the dazed woman into all the glories of the new home.

Mr. Horton carried Gwenny straight to her own room, and laid her down on the sparkling, gleaming brass bed, where he left her listening to Mary's rapid explanations. When he went downstairs he found Mrs. Harter in the kitchen, crying silently.

"Now, now, Mrs. Harter, you must not do that!" he said. "Brace up like a good woman! Gwenny will need a lot of care for a few days, and you will need all your strength."

"Oh, but I am so thankful that my heart feels as though it would break!" said Mrs. Harter.

Mr. Horton laughed. "It won't break," he said. "Minnie, shall I take you home?"

"Thank you, sir, but my Tom is coming over a little later. I have supper all fixed, so we will have a small feast to celebrate, after Gwenny is attended to and safe in bed, so I will get home nicely, thank you."

"Good night then," said Mr. Horton. "Don't let those Girl Scouts run over you, Mrs. Harter." He raised his hat and ran down the steps whistling.

"There goes one good man," said Minnie sol-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

emny. "Come, dear, and take off your hat in your own house, and see the ducky closet under the stairs to keep it in."

And so it was that Gwenny came home.

Mr. Horton sped to his own home as fast as he dared drive the car, the chauffeur sitting silently beside him. Robert was too happy to let anyone else handle the wheel. Once more he dashed up the steps three at a time, whistling. Rosanna was at the door.

"Be careful of your heart, Uncle Robert," she whispered, looking around to see that her grandmother was not within hearing. "Were they pleased?"

"*Were* they?" said Uncle Robert. "I should say they *were*! Everybody perfectly happy! Gwenny staring around her pretty room, and Mrs. Harter crying in the sink. Yes, everybody is happy. Teedle-ee, teedle-oo!" warbled Uncle Robert.

"How good and kind you are, dear Uncle Robert!" said Rosanna tenderly.

"Yes, *ain't I*?" said Uncle Robert, deliberately ungrammatical. "Oh, yes, I *be*!" he went on chanting, as he sat down and fished out a cigarette. Then changing to a sober tone, "Rosanna, whom do you think I found in Cincinnati? Up there at that Hospital as large as life?"

"I don't know," said Rosanna.

"Well, if you will believe me, there was that bad

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

little bit of a Miss Hooker, who had come back from Atlantic City to see that Gwenny was all right. She helped me bring them home. And Rosanna, perhaps I didn't *get even* with her, for what she said about my being funny! You know I told you I would. I did! It was hard, hard work but I done it, I done it! Tra-la-de-lu-de-lu-de-i-i-i-i-i!" yodeled Uncle Robert, whisking the ash off his cigarette.

"What did you do to her?" asked Rosanna in a small, fearful voice.

Uncle Robert looked very sternly at Rosanna.

"What did I do?" he asked. "What did I *do*? Well, I made her promise to marry me; *that's* what I did! Pretty smart uncle, hey, Rosanna?"

CHAPTER XIII

ROSANNA sank feebly down on the hall bench, and to her own surprise and Uncle Robert's dismay burst into tears.

"Well, who next?" said Uncle Robert. "Mrs. Harter crying in the sink, and you weeping all over our nice hall. Oh dear, what a wet, wet world!"

"Oh, don't mind me," said Rosanna, choking back her sobs. "I am perfectly happy, only everything turns out so differently from everything else!"

"I suppose you are right," granted Uncle Robert. "You must be if you know what you mean."

"I am not sure *what* I mean," said Rosanna, "but I am so glad, glad, *glad* that you are going to marry that dear darling Miss Hooker instead of that high nosed madam!"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Robert. "High nosed? Who is she?"

"I think it is someone Minnie made up," said Rosanna. "She said what a shame if she married you."

"Well, she didn't and won't," declared Uncle Robert with conviction. "And as far as *nose* goes, my girl has only enough nose so that one knows it is a nose. Get that, Rosanna?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Rosanna giggled. "Have you told grandmother?" she asked.

Uncle Robert looked suddenly sobered.

"No, I didn't, and I should have done so first and I meant to, and it is all your fault, Rosanna."

"How so?" asked Rosanna in surprise.

"Well, if it hadn't been for you I would never have been traipsing over the country on errands for the Girl Scouts and you wouldn't have been waiting for me in the hall, and I wouldn't have been so fussed at seeing you that I would forget to tell my mamma first. And she won't like it unless she gets told right quick," added Uncle Robert, getting up. Rosanna wiped her eyes, whereupon Uncle Robert sang:

"There, little girlie, don't you cry,
We'll have a wedding by and by,"

and ran up the stairs, three at a time, whistling as he went in search of his mother.

Uncle Robert was not one to take chances. After seeing his mother, who was truly pleased and had the good sense to show it, he started to Mrs. Hargrave's, and after a short visit left that dear old lady busy at the telephone. The result was a wonderful announcement luncheon a week later, given by Mrs. Hargrave, at which the little Captain looked dimplier and sweeter than ever. After the luncheon she went over to Rosanna's house, where

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

she found all her Girl Scouts ready to congratulate her.

"You won't give us up, will you?" they all asked anxiously, and she assured them that she would not. Seeing that they were really anxious, she made them all sit down close around her, and one by one they sang the Scout songs. They were happier after that, and only Rosanna was just a little lonely when she thought of the days when Uncle Robert was away, and reflected that all the days would be like that by-and-by. Just her grandmother and herself in the great stately old house, not occupying half of the rooms, and making so little noise that it made her lonely just to think of it. However, she put it out of her mind as bravely as she could.

Miss Hooker stayed to dinner, and Mrs. Horton was so charming that Rosanna could not help thinking what a very lovely young lady she must have been. After dinner, Mrs. Horton calmly carried her little guest away to her own sitting-room for what she called a consultation, and Rosanna and Uncle Robert who had nothing whatever to consult about now, sat and read. Upstairs, Mrs. Horton sat down opposite her son's sweetheart, and said smilingly:

"I want to say something to you that Robert does not dream I am going to say, and if you do not approve, I want you to be frank enough and brave enough to tell me. Will you?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"Yes, indeed I will," Miss Hooker promised.

"I am an old woman, my dear, and silent. Sometimes I fear I am not very agreeable. It is a hard and unchildlike life that our little Rosanna leads here with me. I want you to ask yourself if for her sake you could bring yourself to live here for a few years. I know how dear a new little house is to a bride's heart, and I tremble to ask you such a favor. But Rosanna has a lonely life at best, and with you here this house could be made gay indeed.

"I would never ask it for myself, but I do for Rosanna. I would gladly do anything I could for her, but I cannot fill the house with the sort of joy and gayety that she should have. She loves you deeply, and her Uncle Robert is her ideal.

"Wait a moment, dear," she added as she saw her guest was about to speak. "I want to tell you what we could do. There are nine large rooms on this floor. You could select what you want for a suite, and you and Robert could decorate and furnish and arrange them to suit yourselves. I would be so glad to do this just as you wish, and then of course, my dear, the house is all yours besides. Could you consider it?"

"I don't have to consider it," said the little Captain. "I have already thought about it, and was worried about Rosanna, but I knew that she could not come to us and leave you all alone here. I am sure Bob will be glad to arrange it as you sug-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

gest, for he is very devoted to his mother and to Rosanna as well."

Mrs. Horton gave a sigh of relief. "I can't thank you enough, my dearest girl," she said. "No one wants to make your life as happy as I do, and if there is anything I can ever do for you, you have only to tell me. Now we must have everything new in the rooms you want, so we will go down and tell Robert and Rosanna. How glad that child will be!"

Rosanna was tired and very nervous, and when Mrs. Horton and Miss Hooker came down with their great plan, Rosanna once more, to her own horror, commenced to cry.

"Well, for goodness' sake," her uncle cried, "I never *did* see anything like this! What ails the child? This certainly settles me! I shall never, never plan to get married again. Rosanna is turning into a regular *founting*; yes, ma'am, a regular *founting*!"

"Oh, I am so sorry — no, I mean I am so *glad*," said Rosanna.

"You mean you are all tired out, and ought to go to bed," said her grandmother.

"And if I am to come here to live," said Robert's sweetheart, dimpling, "I may as well see how I shall like putting a girl in her little bed."

Rosanna, nearly as tall as the little lady, laughed through her tears. She went over and kissed her uncle good-night.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"I am sorry I was so silly," she whispered. "I was so lonely when I thought you were going away that somehow when I found you were not, why, I just couldn't help myself."

"I know how you felt. It is all right, sweetness," Uncle Robert whispered back. Rosanna's clasp tightened round his neck.

"Uncle Robert, shall I — do you suppose — will I be your sweetness just the same even after you are married?"

Uncle Robert kissed her hard. "Before and after, and forever and ever more!" he said. "Just as soon as I get to be a sober married man, I shall be your uncle and your daddy too, and you are going to be the happiest little girl in the world."

"Oh, Uncle Robert!" was all Rosanna could say, but her look thanked him and tears were very near his own eyes as he watched the little orphaned girl skipping off with her arm around the shoulders of his future wife. But they were tears of happiness.

"Don't you love this room, Captain?" asked Rosanna, as she switched on the soft flood of light.

"Indeed I do!" said Miss Hooker. "I expect to spend a great deal of my time here. Between us, Rosanna, we ought to be able to plan the most wonderful things for our Scout troop. And next summer Bob says he will find a place for us to camp, and fit us out with tents and all that, so we will not have to go to a boarding-house or hotel,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

but stay right in the open. Won't that be splendid?"

"Think of it!" said Rosanna. "Won't the girls be wild when they hear about it? Oh, dear, I wish I was eighteen so I could be a lieutenant!"

"I don't wish you were eighteen," said Miss Hooker. "I like you just as you are."

"Oh, Miss Hooker, you are so sweet!" said Rosanna.

Miss Hooker dimpled. "One thing we had better settle right now," she said. "What are you going to call me?"

Rosanna looked blank. "I hadn't thought about that at all. Of course I can't go on calling you Miss Hooker, and then Mrs. Horton. And you are too little and too young to be anybody's aunt."

Miss Hooker watched her with a smile.

"What are you going to do about it then? I want you to call me just what you like. You are to choose."

"Then I will tell you what," said Rosanna brightly. "I was reading the sweetest little story the other day about a Spanish family, and they called each other *Cita*. It means *dear*."

"*Cita*," repeated Miss Hooker. "Why, I think that is just as sweet as it can be, and I should love to have you call me that."

"Then that is what you are, little *Cita*," said Rosanna with a kiss. And to her devoted household, *Cita* she remains to this very day.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Cita and Uncle Robert did not seem able to agree on a date for their wedding. Cita declared that it would take at least six or eight months to get what she mysteriously called her "things" together. Uncle Robert declared with equal fervor that she had everything she needed, and that they were not going to go off and live on a desert isle where there were no shops.

Finally Uncle Robert had an inspiration. "I tell you what let's do," he said after a long argument. "Let's leave this to an outsider: someone with no special interest in the affair. And as a business man, I will name the agent."

"Very well," said Cita. "See that you play fair."

"I name and nominate Miss Rosanna Horton, and as her aids and assistants I name and nominate Miss Helen Culver and Miss Elise Hargrave."

"That is not playing fair at all!" cried Cita. "You know perfectly well that they want us to be married soon."

Robert shook his head. "Not at all! Our marriage is detrimental to those persons named, inso-much as I shall take you off on a wedding trip, and by so doing shall interfere with the routine of work in your Scout troop. That is a good committee, and I shall trust them. I shall now call them in."

The three girls were working in the Scout room on the tarleton stockings, filling and tying them. Robert stepped to the door and summoned them.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Putting the question before them in the most serious manner, he told them that they were to decide.

"I should think I ought to decide my *own* wedding day!" cried Cita.

"You don't seem able to do it," said Robert. "You have been trying to decide for the last ten days. You see it is a business proposition with me. Perhaps if these good, kind young ladies succeed in fixing a wedding day, say before Christmas, I won't have to buy you any Christmas present."

"I don't *want* to be married before Christmas," wailed Cita, looking appealingly at the girls.

Rosanna nodded her head understandingly, and the three girls left the room.

"When will we set it?" asked Helen. "Do they really mean that we are to do so?"

"Tell him we have decided on the fifteenth of February," said Rosanna. "That is the date she has fixed, but he is such a tease that she has been teasing him in return. That will give her all the time she needs, and she won't be all tired out. Everyone loves her, and wants to do things for her and, besides, it is going to take weeks to get those rooms fixed. I never saw grandmother so fussy over anything before. She is going clear to New York and is going to take Cita to select hangings, and she has an artist friend selecting pictures; that is, a list for Cita to look over. Grandmother wants every last thing to be Cita's own selection. And,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

girls, it is going to be *too* lovely. What do you think? You know those ceilings are about twenty feet high, and grandmother has had them all lowered with plaster board and beams, so it looks so much cozier. Grandmother is really splendid. I never loved her so much."

"Are you almost ready to report?" demanded Uncle Robert at the door.

"All ready!" said Helen as the committee went skipping in.

"Well, let's hear the verdict," said Uncle Robert. "If this committee is as sensible as it looks, I expect to hear them say that the date is set for next week Tuesday."

"The fifteenth of February," said Rosanna firmly.

A look of relief spread over Cita's face.

"Wha-a-a-t?" said Uncle Robert. "Impossible! Why, *I* named this committee and by all the rules of politics you should have brought in the report I want."

"But it wouldn't have been fair," said Rosanna.

"What has that to do with politics?" groaned Uncle Robert. "All right! I have been done up; sold out, and by my own constituents. The fifteenth of February it is. But don't you dare to make it a day later, young ladies!" He rose.

"Where are you going?" asked Rosanna.

"Where?" said Uncle Robert, with a twinkle in his eye. "You ask me where? Well, I am go-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

ing to drag myself downtown to get that Christmas present."

"And now," said Cita after he had gone, "now don't let's think of weddings or anything else but our Scout work. Things have been dragging lately, and I think it is my fault. If we do not do better and snappier work right away, I will know it is my fault, and I shall give the troop over to someone else. Engaged girls have no business trying to run a troop."

"Don't say that, Cita," said Rosanna. "We have all been working so hard for Christmas that I think we have no energy left."

"Possibly," said Cita, "but we must put things pretty well in order at the next meeting, and before then I want all these Christmas things marked and in their proper baskets. That meeting, the last before the holidays, will be an important one."

"Then let us go to work merrilee," said Elise, picking up a stocking, and letting a gumdrop slide down into the toe.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER the usual formalities of a meeting, Captain Hooker desired the girls' full attention. She held a formidable sheaf of notes in her hand, and it looked to the Scouts as though there was going to be a good deal of work parcelled out to them.

"In the first place," said their Captain, "I have asked the approval of the National Headquarters, and you are at liberty to send a Thanks badge to Doctor Branshaw. Now you have not yet sent him any formal thanks for what he did for Gwenny and I wonder if any of you have an idea of some attractive way of expressing your gratitude."

"I thought of something, Captain," said Lucy Breen, "but perhaps it wouldn't do."

"Let us hear it," said the Captain.

"How would it be to write him, each of us, a short letter of thanks, just a few words, and at the top of each letter paste a snapshot of the girl who has written it? Then bind them all in a sort of cover or folder with our motto and a print of our flower on the outside."

"I think that is simply a splendid idea," cried the Captain. "Don't you think so, girls?"

Of course everyone did, and it was settled that Rosanna should go and buy the paper for the letters

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

so they should all be alike. As for the cover, Miss Hooker, who was an artist of more than ordinary talent and skill, offered to illuminate the cover with the cornflower as the motif; and she decided to illuminate it on parchment, with the deep blue of the flowers and dull gold lettering. The girls who had no snapshot of themselves promised to have one taken at once. Before they finished, the "Thanks Book" as they called it, promised to become a beautiful and very attractive affair. Miss Hooker warned them all to write natural and simple letters.

"How many of you have been over to see Gwenny in her new home?" asked the Captain. "After the holidays, I think it would be a very kind thing for you to each give up an afternoon once in so often (you can decide how often you can spare the time), and go spend the afternoon with Gwenny. Her mother feels that she should do a little work now and that faithful little Mary is taking care of a couple of children over here on Third Street every afternoon, to earn her share of the household expenses. So Gwenny is left very much alone."

"My mother has been in the Norton Infirmary for a month," said one of the girls, "and she said the nurse told her that it would mean a great deal to some of these patients if we girls would only come in once in awhile, and talk to some of the patients who get so lonely. Mother said there was a boy there with a broken hip, and he was always

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

going to be lame, and he grieved so about it all the time that it kept him from getting well. And there was another patient, a girl about my age, with something wrong with her back. She is in a plaster cast, and her only relative is a father who travels, and he is in California."

"Now there is an idea for you all," said Miss Hooker. "I want to talk all these things over today, because if I am away at any time I want to feel that I know just about what you are doing. I should think that it would do a lot of good to visit those poor young people. There is just one thing to remember if you want to be popular with the nurses and helpful to the patients: always stay just a little *shorter* time than you are expected to. Then the nurses feel that you are wise enough to be trusted without tiring the patients, and the patients are left with the desire to see you soon again."

"That is just what my mother said," said the girl who had spoken. "She says so many people come who just stay and stay and if the nurse does not get around in time to send them home, why, they have the patient in a fever."

"Perfectly true," said Miss Hooker. "Make your visits short — and often. Next," said the Captain, "I want to tell you that Lucy Breen has passed the examinations successfully in two subjects. She is now entitled to wear the Merit badge for Horsemanship and Clerk."

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

All the girls clapped.

"*Bon bon*, dear Lucee!" whispered Elise.

Lucy smiled back at the dear girl who had befriended her at a moment when she needed a friend so badly.

"I want to ask how many of you girls are taking regular exercises every morning?" asked Captain Hooker. "It does not seem as though you had as good color as you should have. I want my girls to be the finest looking troop at the great meeting in the spring. It is to be in Washington; did I tell you? And I want every one of you to go. Now there is an incentive to work. The rally is in June just after school is over, and I want you to earn the money for your railroad tickets. Of course we will all get special rates, and it will not cost us anything after we arrive there, as we will be the guests of the Washington Scouts, or some of the women's organizations. But you should all of you be able to earn ten dollars before that time. It will take that much, but no more. If any of you girls belong to families who could send you, you are at liberty to help some other girl who is less fortunate, but you must each one of you earn the sum I have mentioned."

"What if we earn more?" asked Lucy Breen.

"I am sure you will be glad to have a little spending money when you get to Washington," said Miss Hooker.

"Some of us will earn more and some less," said

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Helen. "After we earn the ten dollars, why couldn't we put everything else we earn in your hands, and then it could be evenly divided at the end, and we would each have the same amount to spend, and when we come home we can each tell what we spent it for."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Miss Hooker. "What do you girls think of that? I think it would be quite a test of your ability to get a good deal of pleasure or profit out of a stated amount."

Again everybody clapped, and with a little more discussion the subject was left settled.

One of the Webster girls raised a hand.

"What would you suggest that we could do to earn money?" she said. "All we can do is dance, and mamma won't let us dance in public until we are grown up. We don't know how to do anything else."

"Marian, I get awfully cross with you sometimes," laughed Miss Hooker. "What are those two merit badges on your sleeve?"

"Oh, *those!*" said Marian in a helpless voice. "The gridiron for Cooking and the palm leaf for Invalid Cooking. But I can't go out and cook."

"What can you make best?" asked Miss Hooker.

Another girl spoke up. "She makes the loveliest jellies you ever tasted and they always stand right up, never slump over at all."

"And you, Evelyn Webster, what is that on your sleeve?"

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

"The palette," said Evelyn.

"There you are!" said Miss Hooker. "What is the good of earning these badges if you are never going to make use of the things they stand for?" She picked up the Girl Scouts Hand Book that was lying on her lap, and turning over the pages said, "Listen to this:

"Employment.

"'Stick to it,' the thrush sings. One of the worst weaknesses of many people is that they do not have the perseverance to stick to what they have to do. They are always wanting to change. Whatever you do, take up with all your might and stick to it. Besides the professions of nursing, teaching, stenography and typewriting and clerking, there are many less crowded employments, such as hair-dressing, making flowers, coloring photographs, and assisting dentists, and gardening. There are many occupations for women, but before any new employment can be taken up, one must begin while young to make plans and begin collecting information. 'Luck is like a street car, the only way to get it, is to look out for every chance and seize it — run at it, and jump on; don't sit down and wait for it to pass. Opportunity is a street car which has few stopping places.'

"Now there you are, Marian and Evelyn, with your jelly and your beautiful lettering. Make some of that jelly, and put it in the prettiest glasses you can find, and tie the tops on with a little ribbon

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

from the five-and-ten-cent store, and illuminate some sample cards for window displays, and take them down to the Women's Exchange. You, Evelyn, take your cards to the manager of one of the big stores, and ask him if he could use such work. He will probably want a thousand of them. I am glad this came up. If you are all as helpless as Evelyn and Marian when it comes to using your knowledge, why, there is really not much use in earning merit badges.

"I think we will talk this over for ten minutes informally, and then we will call the roll, and see what each one thinks she can do."

The Captain turned to the Lieutenant and commenced to talk to her in a low tone, and for ten minutes the room buzzed. Then at the sharp command of the Lieutenant's whistle silence fell, and the roll was called, and each girl's chosen task was jotted down beside her name. The outlook was rather black for some of the girls who had chosen to try for merits in unusual rather than in available subjects. For instance, one girl wore badges for proficiency in Swimming, Signaling, Pioneer, Pathfinder, and Marksmanship.

None of these seemed to offer an opening for moneymaking, especially during the winter months. But she was plucky, and merely said that she would find a way to earn the money. And she did it by going to the Y. W. C. A. and assisting the swimming mistress for a couple of hours every after-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

noon. So well did she do that when the money was turned in, she had twenty-five dollars to put in the general fund for spending money.

Another girl had a merit badge for Aviation, but she went to work in her workshop and built box kites that no boy could resist, and sold them by the dozen.

As Miss Hooker told them, the trick was to make use of what they had learned. Of course a good deal of this worked itself out later, but when they had finished their discussion, and Miss Hooker had urged them to get to work as soon as they possibly could, she changed the subject by saying, with just a little hesitation:

“I wonder how many of you know that I am to be married?”

Every hand rose and a voice said, “But we don’t know when.”

“That is what I want to talk to you about,” smiled Miss Hooker. “We are going to be married on the fifteenth of February, and I shall not have bridesmaids and all that girls usually have; I want my own Scout girls as attendants — all of you. Will you all come?”

There was a series of exclamations of “Oh, Miss Hooker!” and “Indeed we will!”

“Thank you!” said Miss Hooker, quite as though she was asking a favor instead of conferring one. “Then I will depend on all of you, and a little later I will tell you the plan I have for the wedding.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Of course you are to arrange to attend the reception afterwards, and we will have automobiles to take you all home."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" chorused the girls.

Miss Hooker found that after her invitation it was impossible to interest the girls in anything in the nature of routine work, so she soon dismissed the meeting, and the girls as usual piling into the automobiles belonging to Rosanna and Elise and Lucy and one or two others, were driven home in a great state of excitement.

A Girl Scout wedding! That was what it amounted to. Miss Hooker,—their dear Captain, thought so much of them that she had chosen them to attend her rather than her own friends. It was thrilling in the extreme.

It struck about twenty of them about the same time later, that there had been nothing said about clothes. This was an awful thought. Rosanna seemed likely to know more than any of the others, on account of the distinction of having Miss Hooker marry her uncle, so the twenty anxious maidens rushed to as many telephones and gave central a very bad time for about an hour, saying "Line's busy," while Rosanna talked to each one as she secured a clear line, and assured her that she knew nothing at all about it.

CHAPTER XV

THE fifteenth of February sparkled all day long. Not half of the Scouts were able to sleep, and they saw the round bright sun bounce out of the east and start blazing up in a cloudless sky. All day it was the same. Not a cloud in the sky, not a shadow on the earth. Automobile horns seemed to take on a joyous toot. The heavy "ding, dong, ding, dong," of the locomotive bell as it crossed Third Street lost its mournful tone and sounded sweetly solemn like a wedding bell.

All day relays of restless Scouts belonging to Captain Hooker's troop drifted in at the open door of the beautiful old cathedral and watched the silent workmen setting the palms and flowers under the direction of a bevy of young ladies who were Miss Hooker's schoolmates and life-long friends. They had claimed the right to decorate the church since they were not included in the wedding other than as spectators.

On twenty-four beds twenty-four Girl Scout uniforms in a terrifying condition of starch and cleanliness lay stiffly out, with hats and staffs beside them. And at about three in the afternoon twenty-four Girl Scouts lay down on other beds, so they

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

would be "fresh" for the wedding. All the shades were pulled down, but not one of the twenty-four managed to get to sleep. It was awful! Actually painful! Each one lay wondering what the others were doing, and what Miss Hooker was doing. Wondered what she would wear, wondered if she was frightened. The two Websters had refused to rest in separate rooms, so they talked in a cautious undertone, while their mother in the next room pressed imaginary creases out of their tunics. The whole troop had beautiful new hair ribbons from Miss Hooker and from Mr. Horton a beautiful gold bangle bracelet. A messenger boy had delivered them all around just at noon, and while they rested twenty-four left arms were held up to catch the light on the gleaming band. The idea of anyone sleeping!

At six o'clock sharp the Lieutenant, Miss Jamieson, hurried up the steps of the Hargrave house where the girls were to meet, and ten minutes later three patrols marched nervously along and turned in. Then for endless ages, too nervous to talk, they sat waiting for the automobiles that were to carry them to the old cathedral. They were torn with fears. What if Mr. Horton and his best man, Doctor MacLaren, had forgotten to order the cars at all? What if they should be late, and the wedding go on without them? The voice of Mrs. Hargrave's house boy announcing "De cahs is heah, ma'am," sounded like music.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

The cathedral, down in the oldest part of the city, seemed a million miles away, and the cars crawled. Not a traffic policeman but stopped them as they approached — but at last they arrived and entered the church. How beautiful it was, softly yet brilliantly lighted through its high arches. White satin with heavy gold embroideries draping altar and desk, tall candles burning at either side of the Cross. And somewhere softly, thrillingly out of space, spoke the most entrancing music.

People went down the aisles in gaily clad groups, the delicate perfumes of the flowers worn by beautiful women wafting to the girls as they passed. Mrs. Breen's two brothers and the brothers of the two Girl Scouts who had helped at the benefit were all acting as ushers and they were certainly busy.

Standing just inside the door, the girls were aware of a little stir, and a group entered, walking more slowly and carefully than the others. Even the girls were surprised as they stared. For first of all came Gwenny, Gwenny leaning heavily on the arm of the kindly sign painter, but Gwenny was *walking!*

Behind, looking very shiny and quite agonized, followed Mary and Tommy and little Myron firmly clutching the still littler Luella, who looked on the verge of tears. After them, to close all avenue of escape, walked Mrs. Harter, and Minnie and Tom. Very slowly, in Gwenny's halting footsteps,

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

they went down the aisle — down and down until they came to the satin ribbon that fenced off a portion of the seats for Miss Hooker's most particular friends. And even then they did not stop, for Doctor MacLaren, who was with them, led them to the fourth seat from the front. It had evidently been saved for them, for in the corner next the aisle was a big pillow for Gwenny's back. Cita's girl friends kept drifting in, lovely, colorful creatures in dancing frocks, and the girls reflected with joy that they too were asked to the reception afterwards.

Then came the group of the bride's relatives, and close behind, Mrs. Horton, walking with her hand on the arm of the older Breen boy, and looking like a queen in her pale gray satin robe, brocaded with silver.

And then the Lieutenant, who had been standing outside all this time, returned, looking quite pale, and gave an order in a tone so low that half of the girls did not hear at all, but they were so keyed up that they knew just what to do and formed a double line facing the chancel.

The music burst suddenly, joyously into the Wedding March, and the girls started slowly down the broad aisle, keeping step to the music. So smoothly and so quickly had it been done that they had not had a glimpse of the bride, who was following them on her father's arm, with Rosanna all in white before her as maid of honor.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

Down the aisle, straight and trim, marched the Guard of Honor. When the first two girls reached the foot of the chancel steps, they stopped and turned to face each other, taking two steps backward. As the line all formed, the staffs were raised until the tips met, and under this arch, all misty tulle and gleaming satin, her cheeks faintly flushed, her lips softly smiling, passed their little Captain. Mr. Robert who had been waiting just beyond came forward and took her hand, and the Dean stepped down to meet them, while the Bishop waited before the altar.

The music muted. And in the place of the march came faint sighs of melody. Then in a pause of the ceremony, from somewhere silvery chimes rang out. The little bride stood motionless, her tulle train seeming to melt into the whiteness of the marble on which she stood.

And then, almost at once it seemed, it was all over. The little Captain had made her new vows, the ring was on her hand, the blessing on her bowed head. Quite solemnly Mr. Robert kissed her, then the organ broke out with a burst that filled the great church, and fairly beat down the rising throngs, as the married couple, passing under the crossed staves, passed down the aisle and out into their new life.

The Guard of Honor, in their automobiles once more and whirling after the bridal car to the reception, found their tongues and all talked at once.

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

No one listened; no one cared. They went through a canopied, carpeted tunnel across the sidewalk to the house, and there were firmly handled by a bevy of colored maids who took their staffs and hats and sent them forth with nothing to do with their hands. But Mr. Robert shook all the hands they had, and the little Captain kissed them each and every one. And then she asked them to form just back of her until she had greeted all the guests. This took a long time, but was such fun, because they saw everyone and all the dresses, and everything.

But finally the line thinned out, the congratulations were over, and the little Captain, taking her filmy train over her arm, drifted out among the guests and the girls broke up into groups. A little later Rosanna came hurrying around to tell the girls to come to the library. They found the Captain and her husband there, talking to a chubby, smiling, altogether kindly and delightful little gentleman, who stared beamingly at them through immense horn-rimmed spectacles.

"I want to present you to Doctor Branshaw, girls," said Mrs. Horton. "He came all the way from Cincinnati to attend our wedding and to meet you."

The girls stepped up one by one to be presented to the great man.

"I didn't see any other way of meeting you all," he said. "My time is always so broken, and they

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

keep me so busy down there that I actually didn't have time to write and tell you how greatly I appreciated that book you sent me. I think it was quite the nicest thing in the world. I shall always keep it."

"It was poor thanks for what you did for Gwenny," said Miss Jamieson, finding that someone had to answer.

"I was glad to do it," said the Doctor, "after you had led the way. It is an honor to work with the Girl Scouts. When you are twice as old, yes, three times as old as you are now, you will realize what a wonderful work you are doing in the world. I come across evidences of it every day. This Gwenny, for instance. Did you see the way she went down that long aisle tonight? Why, that girl is going to be well, perfectly well! Think of the years of pain and misery you have saved her, the agonizing nights and the untimely death. Whose plan was it, anyway?"

"Rosanna Horton's," said half a dozen voices.

Rosanna flushed. "No, don't say that!" she objected. "It is just as the doctor says. If I thought of it it was because I am a Scout. Call it the Girl Scouts' Plan."

"Yours or theirs, Miss Rosanna; it was a divine thought and should make you all happy. You have given the three greatest boons to a fellow creature, life, health, and happiness, and all because your

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

splendid order teaches you to watch for just such opportunities. Now I will give you an opportunity to do a good deed tonight," and he laughed the jolliest laugh. "There are a couple of very wise gentlemen here tonight, who would like to talk to me, and they would want to talk about operations and anesthetics and all those things that I left locked up in my office at home. But I can't tell them that, so I wish you could just look after me for the next hour, and sort of beau me around, you know, and if you see any bald heads or spectacles bearing down on us, just close in and protect me."

"Oh, we will!" chorused the girls, greatly pleased.

So the great Dr. Branshaw, quite the greatest and most eminent man present, passed happily from room to room surrounded and tagged by a chatting, smiling throng of uniformed girls.

When a cheering looking line of waiters appeared with plates and napkins, the great man and his little court settled in a cozy nook and proceeded to fly in the face of all the best health experts. And to see the Doctor shamelessly send for more bouillon, and consume sandwiches, and sliced turkey, and candied sweet potato and salad, and oh, dear, all sorts of things, was enough to make any Scout hungry, and they just feasted and feasted.

Although the doctor refused to talk to the wise men, he did talk to the girls, getting on the sub-

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

ject dearest to him, as all professional men will, and telling them many an amusing story and pathetic incident.

Finally he rose. "I must go, girls," he said. "I said good-bye to Mrs. Horton when I came in, so I could just slip out a little side door there is here."

He shook hands all around and patted each straight shoulder. "Don't forget me," he said, "and remember if there is anything I can do to help, we are all working together. See this?" He smiled and pulled aside his coat. There on his waistcoat was the Thanks Badge they had sent him. "I always wear it," he said, and with a merry good-bye hurried through the little door, and was gone.

Rosanna went to the hall and looked out.

"Hurry, hurry!" she called. "Here she comes! We nearly missed her!"

The bride, in her travelling dress, was coming down the stairs. She paused on the landing and looked down at the sea of smiling faces below. Then suddenly she tossed her bouquet out. A dozen hands reached for it, and the girl who caught it danced up and down. Everyone laughed.

"What did she do that for?" asked one of the Websters.

"The one who catches the bride's bouquet," said Miss Jamieson, "will be the next one married."

"Quick!" cried Elise. "Let us all form the guard-line for her. Never mind those staves!"

Slipping through the throng and out the door, the

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

girls formed a double line to the automobile waiting at the curb. A great white bow was tied on the back, and Rosanna quickly took it off and hid it.

"Cita wouldn't like that," she explained. Then she stood with her hand on the door. The house door opened and in a blaze of light, confetti and rice showering about her, rose leaves floating above her, the little bride and her tall young husband ran down the steps and through the double line of Scouts, who closed solidly before the door of the limousine as she entered it. The other guests were shut out. For that moment she was again their little Captain and belonged to them alone. Forming in a solid group, they suddenly shouted the Girl Scout yell, threw her a shower of kisses, and crying good-bye over and over, watched her little hand wave a farewell as the car sprang forward.

Helen and Elise were Rosanna's guests for the night. A couch had been prepared so the three girls could sleep in the same room. They rolled themselves up in bathrobes, and sat on the edge of the couch just as they had sat on the top step so many months ago, only this time Elise did not knit. She too sat with her chin in her hands, staring out of the window. Rosanna had snapped off the light. A million stars in a deep frosty sky looked down on them. The night sparkled. It was very, very late, but Mrs. Horton with surpassing

THE GIRL SCOUTS RALLY

wisdom had not asked them to go right to bed. She too was awake, dreaming long dreams.

Presently Elise spoke. "So much of happiness makes me sad," she said.

"Well, it is all over," sighed Rosanna.

"Not at all!" cried Elise. "What could be over? Not Meeses Horton, who is just beginning. Not us, who have so many, many works to do. Not Gwenny who steps into a new life. Just see all those stars. They shine and sparkle always, no matter what goes on down here."

"You sound like a little sermon, Elise dear," said Helen, smiling.

"I don't know just yet what it is you call sermon, but I hope it is nice," replied Elise.

"Yours is, anyway," said Rosanna, kissing the fair face beside her."

"All I meant was that this is over, the wedding and all that. Oh, of course I didn't mean that *everything* was over. It is just as though a beautiful day had ended, as it has," Rosanna continued. "Others will come, many, many other busy, beautiful days, and on my honor, I will try to do my duty to God and my country, to help other people at all times and to obey the Scout laws," said Rosanna softly, lifting her eyes to the eternal stars.

THE END

